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OR, Too Much for Red Leary.

The Story of the City Park Tragedy.

BY DAN DUNNING,
(Of the Secret Service Corps.)

CHAPTER I.

THE MURDER IN THE PARK.

'TWAS a stormy night. The rain, falling in torrents, had caused the usually much-frequented City Park of Brooklyn to be deserted, when, just before closing time, three men entered the Park—two of them fairly carrying the third, who appeared to be very drunk.

They stopped about the center of the Park, where the drunken man was placed on a bench under a tree, and one of the others said:

RED LEARY'S HAND WAS ALMOST ON THE BELL KNOB WHOSE SIGNAL WAS TO CONSIGN THE DETECTIVE TO DEATH, WHEN BOTH WERE STARTLED BY: "WELL—I—GUESS—NOT!"

"Now, Jack! Be quick about it, or he'll come to before you're through!"

The man addressed as "Jack" hurriedly began removing money and papers from the drunken man's pockets, while the other stood guard.

Suddenly, the robber dropped something, and stooped to recover it, but the other, with a curse, ordered him to let it go, at the same time taking the drunken man's watch from his pocket.

This action seemed to arouse the latter, and he started as if to get up, but the guard caught him by the throat, and held him down.

"Quick, Jack!" he cried. "He's coming to! Smash him over the head!"

The drunken man appeared to understand what was said, and began to struggle desperately, but the clutch on his throat only grew tighter, and when Jack struck him on the head he fell back—dead!

It had been robbery up to this point. Now it became murder!

"We're in for it now!" exclaimed the bigger man, hoarsely. "Let's get!"

"Hold on! We might as well have this ring. Curse it! I can't get it off!"

"Cut it off! Hurry up!"

A minute later, the dead man's finger was severed, and the coveted ring removed.

Next morning, after opening the gates, the policeman strolling through the Park found a man dead—murdered, it was plain, on one of the benches, and, hailing the first person who passed, sent word to the station-house.

The dead man was about forty years of age, well built, and looked as though well able to take care of himself—yet, it was evident he had been choked to death.

It was a little after five o'clock, when the body was discovered, and at nine o'clock, a permit having been obtained, it was removed to the morgue.

During this interval hundreds of people on their way to work, and almost every one living in the neighborhood, had viewed the body, but no one identified it.

Among the early arrivals, was a quiet, unobtrusive man, who remained until the body was removed, and who was present at the inquest, and could have told something, but did not.

This was John Austin, a Secret Service officer—"Quiet Jack," as his comrades called him. He was about thirty-five years of age, and scarcely known outside his profession, but famous in that.

At the date of the murder, the illicit distilling of whisky was not only the quickest and most profitable method of making money, but also, apparently, as safe as any of the slower, if more legitimate callings, and from Red Hook Point to Blissville, "private" stills were scattered thickly through the City of Churches.

The "business" was carried on so openly that at length neither political influence nor official blindness could longer prevent a determined effort on the part of the Revenue Department to break up the whisky ring, and "Quiet Jack" Austin was specially detailed to assist the local officers in the work.

The very heart of the business lay in the immediate neighborhood of the murder, and for that reason Austin had been for a week in that section.

During the night of the tragedy, he had been watching a suspicious house near Blissville, and had become satisfied that a raid would prove profitable. He was coming home through the Park in the early morning, and on stopping to look at the dead man, was surprised to recognize one whom he had seen at intervals during the past week, in the company of several hard characters—among them the notorious John, otherwise "Red," Leary.

"Red Leary," was not suspected of being actively engaged in the whisky business; it was too slow for him; but it was more than likely he was interested in one or more of the private stills—backing them.

The murdered man was always well dressed, had, apparently, plenty of money, and was spending it freely whenever Austin had run across him; but further than that nothing, except that he was known as Martinez, was known of him.

Austin attended the inquest, which revealed that, in addition to the choking, Martinez had received a severe blow on the back of the head—which probably stunned him, and then the strangling was done. Further than this, nothing was ascertained, and the positive statements of the policemen, that no one was in the Park when the gates were locked the night be-

fore, only served to deepen the mystery, for the iron railing was twelve feet high, and not at all easy to get over.

With the exception of some small change, nothing of value was found upon the body; his watch and a fine diamond ring, (both of which he had when last seen alive,) were missing, as was the little finger of the right hand, and there was not a scrap of writing to indicate who he was, or where he lived.

The verdict of murder against party or parties unknown being rendered, Austin departed to obtain a warrant, and the men necessary to carry it out, to search the house near Blissville.

The murder was no affair of his, the local detectives were working on it, yet he could not get it out of his head, and so absorbed in thought was he, that he ran plump into a man standing at the entrance of the building in which the U. S. Commissioner's office was located.

"By Jove! We'll have to change it to Sleepy Jack," began the stranger, extending his hand and smiling at Austin's surprise.

"Why, Phil, what are you doing here?" interrupted Austin.

"Come to work with and under you. Fact is, Austin, there's more than a suspicion in the Department that these fellows are being protected."

In response to this, Austin related to his comrade, Philip Morris, what he had done so far, and that he was then about to get a warrant.

"All right, Jack! But you'll only scare the other birds, and, if what we suspect is true, you won't get these either."

Austin hesitated; he knew Morris spoke the truth, but decided to go ahead, for he remarked:

"I want to show them that the stills are working right under their noses, and that they either can't or won't see them! Perhaps it would be as well for you to wait here, and follow us when we start. None of them know you, do they?"

"No, and I'll keep them so as long as possible," replied Morris. "You go ahead for your warrant; I'll be with you when you get there."

The difficulty and delay Austin encountered in securing the warrant, rendered him more than suspicious that it would prove useless, and when finally, at the end of two hours, it was issued, he placed it in his pocket without comment, and left the office.

At the corner he saw Morris, and signed to him to follow. After two or three turns, Austin passed into a quiet street, where Morris joined him. Both jumped on a car going in the direction of Blissville, but, after riding a few blocks, they got off and entered a chop-house.

Morris, who, while wondering a little at Austin's movements, knew all this was not done for nothing, now received the looked-for explanation.

"By George, Morris! From the way those fellows acted, from the commissioner down, I wouldn't be surprised to know they have followed me!" and Austin related what had occurred in the U. S. Commissioner's office, adding:

"And, of course, I could see it was plainly a game to gain time to notify the people. But, I fooled them by not asking for any help. We will go out just for curiosity, but I'll bet a shilling there's nothing there now."

CHAPTER II. IN THE "RED LIGHT."

It was about five o'clock when the two detectives approached the suspected house, and long before they came to it, Austin could see there had been a sudden and radical change.

At the same hour the previous day, a fat rendering business was in full blast, and a wagon, in which were several barrels, presumably the day's collection in the city, stood at the door.

Now everything was still. The place was closed up and apparently deserted, while on the door was a sign—"For Sale or To Let," with the additional information that particulars could be obtained at the saloon across the street.

Austin smiled grimly as he glanced at the sign in passing, and said:

"The scare must have been a bad one. I didn't expect them to clear out altogether. However, I must learn something more, now that I'm here."

After a few minutes' conversation, Morris departed and Austin sauntered across to the saloon, outside of which was a large lamp, the glass in which was stained red, and gave to the saloon the name by which it was generally known—"The Red Light."

The "Red Light" was well-known to the

tough sporting—theiving element as a safe place for cock-fighting, dog-fighting or prize-fighting.

Just as Austin was about to enter this den, happening to glance across the street, he thought for a moment he saw a face at one of the upper windows, but another look convinced him that he was mistaken; so, entering the saloon, he called for a glass of beer.

Austin was not mistaken, however, for on the top floor of the suspected house there were three men—desperate fellows, who would hesitate at nothing, and who appeared deeply interested in his movements.

"Well, he's in, anyhow," announced the one who had been at the window.

"Yes, and it won't be my fault if he ever comes out!" exclaimed another, a big, powerful ruffian. "I'll go over now. You chaps keep things ready!"

As he spoke the big fellow left the room, and passing down-stairs let himself out at the back of the house. He was the famous "Red" Leary, then a young man, and not so well-known as he became subsequently—especially at the time he escaped from Ludlow Street Jail by tunneling right through the wall of the prison, into a room in an adjoining house hired by confederates.

On leaving the house, "Red" Leary walked about for a few minutes, and then into the Red Light Saloon where he saw Austin, who had taken a seat at one of the tables, talking to the owner of the place.

Austin, immediately on finding Red Leary in this out-of-the-way place, connected him with the house across the road, and was strengthened in this by the familiar way in which he greeted the proprietor of the saloon.

"Hello, Jim!" he cried, "Give us a drink!" and then, apparently just noticing Austin, continued: "What'll ye have? Take something!"

This was the very opportunity Austin was looking for, and rising, he approached the bar, while Smith, the owner of the Red Light, was explaining:

"This gentleman, John, is askin' 'bout the house across the road. Wants to hire it for a saw-mill, but, I've been tellin' him I don't think it'd be let for that."

"Saw-mill, eh? Well, I don't know 'bout that; but they left a key with me, 'n' if ye want to take a look at it ye can. Here's luck!"

Leary said this carelessly, and, as he finished, drank the liquor which he had poured out.

Austin, taken off his guard for a moment, eagerly assented to the proposition, but had no sooner done so than he regretted it.

Each thought he had the advantage of the other in that he was unknown, but the only difference between them was that Leary did not know Austin's name, although fully aware that he was in the revenue service, and therefore possessed a complete description of him.

Austin knew Leary to be a desperate character, and while anxious to get a glimpse of the cellar, began to feel that this meeting was not quite so accidental as it appeared. Nor was the offer to let him examine the house to be accepted carelessly.

All this flashed across Austin in a moment. He did not know exactly how to get out of it, and yet avoid creating suspicion, but, looking calmly about the low-ceilinged bar, as though it was a matter of no consequence, remarked:

"Oh, I don't care about it particularly. Tomorrow will do just as well. It's getting too dark to see much of it."

Red Leary was disappointed, and for one moment showed his chagrin—just long enough for Austin to notice it, and become more wary.

"Well, suit yourself! If you're about this way to-morrow any time, drop in. Jim, here, will give you the key."

This speech again disarmed Austin's suspicions, and he began to think he was wrong regarding Leary's intention toward him.

"Very good! I'll probably get around tomorrow," he answered. "And now, I guess I'll be getting along."

"Hold on a minit! Take something before ye go!" urged Leary.

The Red Light was a miserably furnished affair, but it boasted a small mirror at the back of the bar, and, small as it was, this served to show Austin that Leary meant mischief, for, as he turned back, he caught in the glass a significant look passing between the man in front and the man behind the bar.

That settled it as far as Austin was concerned, and when Smith placed one bottle in front of him, and another in front of Leary, he promptly declined the liquor, saying:

"No, I've enough now! Give me a cigar."

Then, with a hasty "good-night," the dete-

tive passed out before any objection could be offered.

"Blast him! He must have smelt a rat!" exclaimed Leary, and for a moment seemed as though about to follow Austin.

Instead, however, he turned and held an extended conversation with Smith, who in reality was only Leary's figure-head as owner of the Red Light.

Smith was Leary's father-in-law, being the father of the notorious Kate Leary—one of the cleverest shoplifters in existence, even at the present day.

Meantime, the Secret Service Spy was hurrying to meet Morris at a well-known saloon and lodging-house, within a stone's throw of the Navy Yard gate, running yet, but under a different proprietor.

The detective suspected this place to be dealing pretty heavily in whisky from private stills, as they were called, if not running one on its own account, and having been there two or three times, he had sent his partner ahead to see if he would notice anything.

When Austin arrived he found Morris sitting in the back room, with a glass of ale before him, apparently deeply engaged in the evening paper. He took a seat beside him.

"Jack," whispered Morris, after a few minutes' conversation, "let's get out of here—quick!" and Austin arose and invited him to take a walk.

A short walk brought them to the Park where the murder had been committed, and here they took possession of a settee.

"Jack, they're making the stuff right in that place!" averred Morris, as soon as they were seated.

"Sure?"

"Sure! Why, hang it! I could almost see it in the worm! Just before you came the odor of it filled that room."

"Ha! Good, Phil! Good! I suspected it, but could not locate it! Where is it? in the cedar?"

"No. Right back of where we sat. There is a large room there, containing a shuffle-board; but, shuffle-board is played out there, just now."

"Well, how shall we fix it, Phil? Risk a warrant, and the subsequent notification before we can get there, or go right in and seize it? You must be sure of your case, my boy, or we'll get Old Nick!"

"The case is sure enough," responded Morris, "and I would not trust a warrant with those people. Let's go at it ourselves! You must arrange how it's to be done, but to-morrow morning about nine, when everything is quiet, would be a good time, it seems to me."

And having decided how the affair should be managed, the two detectives left the Park.

Parks in Brooklyn are managed differently from those in New York; "keep off the grass" signs are rare, and, although it was nearly closing time, many people were still in the Park—most of them sitting or lying on the soft green-sward.

Austin and his partner had been gone fully five minutes, before a man who had been lying at full length behind the bench they had occupied raised to a sitting position.

"So ye'r' goin' to drop in on Barney, eh?" he muttered. "Well; I guess he'll be ready for ye, me revenue buzzards!"

After a cautious look around, the man arose and walked quickly to the place the detectives intended to seize the next morning, where he was rewarded for his story with a drink of whisky distilled on the premises.

Preparations were at once made for the expected visitors, and word was quietly passed around to the others engaged in the business, that two revenue spies were now on the scent.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISIT TO THE MORGUE—THE EMPTY COFFIN.

THE discovery of the murdered man in the Park had, of course, created something of a sensation, and the reporters had not neglected the opportunity—with the result that both the New York and Brooklyn evening papers fairly photographed the man, and the little that was known about him.

That same evening, a newsboy running along crying "Extree!" was hailed by a young man, just about ascending the stoop of a handsome residence in the upper part of New York.

"What's the Extra for, sonny?" asked the young man, taking some change from his pocket to pay the boy.

"Don't know, sir! Extree! Extree!" and the boy darted off.

When the young man reached the hall, he stood under the gaslight to look at the heading. In a minute or two he became interested, and before stopping read the entire article.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed on finishing: "It's Julie's father!"

The young man was Harry Hammond, and a fine looking fellow he was. Although but just of age, he was fully developed and the picture of health, and strength. Together with his mother, he occupied a handsome residence in the fashionable quarter of New York, where we now meet him for the first time.

As soon as he had finished reading the article, Harry hurried to his mother, and explained that he must go out again at once.

"And I may be late—perhaps stay away all night," he added.

"Very good, Harry. Take care of yourself!" was Mrs. Hammond's injunction. She never questioned his movements, and, in exchange for this confidence, always learned, sooner or later, and from Harry, himself, where he had been and what doing.

Harry Hammond's destination was a residence neither so fashionable, nor as fine as his own, further down-town, and in what might be called the shabby-genteel quarter of the city. Here his ring brought a beautiful girl of about eighteen to the door. She was in deep distress and had evidently been weeping. As the door swung back into the light of the hall gas-jet, the name "Martens" was plainly visible on the plate.

The girl was Julie Martens, and a moment later she was joined by a middle-aged lady, who came from the parlor—Mrs. Martens, the girl's aunt, and the only mother she had ever known.

Hammond saw that what he feared was already known, and silently followed the ladies into the parlor.

Two hours later, a carriage drawn by a pair of foaming horses stopped at the morgue in Brooklyn, and two men jumped out.

It was after nine o'clock, and the older of the two men rung the night-bell, which was quickly answered by the keeper himself (his assistant having gone home), who admitted the visitors.

One of the men was Harry Hammond, and the other the most influential politician of his day, in New York. We will call him Green.

On beholding Green, the morgue-keeper looked surprised and pleased, and warmly shook the hand which the former extended. It was to Green that he owed his appointment.

Hammond was then introduced, a short conversation followed, and the young man then went out, and returned a moment later with Mrs. Martens and her niece.

As they entered, the keeper pointed to the stairs, and Harry led the way up and into a large room on the second floor in which were several slabs, only one of which was occupied.

A solitary jet of gas burned above it.

One glance at the occupant of the slab, and, with a piercing cry—"Papa!" the girl had fainted. Harry caught her in his arms, and locked in alarm at Mrs. Martens, lest she, too, should succumb, but though very pale and troubled, and weeping bitterly, the elder lady kissed the forehead of the dead man, and then motioned Harry to leave.

Down-stairs, seated in the keeper's easy-chair, Julie quickly recovered, and Harry joined his friend, and the keeper.

Just as Harry reached them, Green was saying:

"And Mike, be careful! Make no mistake about this, for I take great interest in the matter on account of this young man. Here are the papers, and you will need some money."

Next morning the papers contained a notice of the death of Henry Martens—"Funeral private," and two days after, three carriages and a hearse left the residence of the late Henry Martens for Greenwood Cemetery.

When near the cemetery, another hearse came from a cross street, and took its place ahead of the Martens hearse and the three carriages. Then for a couple minutes, there was to be seen the rather unusual spectacle of two hearses in one funeral.

At the next crossing, however, the second hearse, the one which had left Mr. Martens's house, turned down the road and was driven rapidly to a near-by hotel, where the driver made himself comfortable until the usual time for returning to New York.

When the hearse driver did return to New York, his employer received back the elegant, but stone-filled casket, which had been carried out of the Martens residence that afternoon.

Among the reports made by the morgue-keeper next day, was that of the burial of Martens—the murdered man.

CHAPTER IV.

A "HOD CARRIER" ON THE TRAIL.

AFTER seeing his mother safely home from the funeral of Mr. Martinez, or rather Martens, Harry Hammond called on Mrs. Martens and Julie.

"It may seem unfeeling," said Harry, plunging at once into the subject and object of his visit, "but it's absolutely necessary that we should get to work on this matter at once. I shall have to ask a good many questions, and you will, of course, tell me anything you know that I fail to touch upon."

And then he plied both aunt and niece with questions, until he had extracted all they knew of the dead man and his affairs—which was:

First: Mr. Martens was supposed to be a very wealthy man, and his expenditures at home and abroad were lavish.

Second: Neither Mrs. Martens nor Julie knew in what business, if any, he was engaged, for he was a man who never mentioned business at home, and would not allow others to do so.

Third: That he was frequently absent from home for a week or more, but never even hinted where he had been, or for what purpose.

Fourth: Both Mrs. Martens and Julie believed there was a great deal of money due the dead man from various people, but his papers contained no memorandum of it.

Fifth: Mr. Martens had always carried a great deal of money, and only a few days before the murder, Mrs. Martens had seen a package of Government bonds in the inside pocket of his overcoat.

And that was all either Mrs. Martens or Julie knew.

Hammond had known a great deal of this before, and on hearing of the outstanding debts, suspected that Mr. Martens had been something of a money-lender.

As he apparently carried the evidences of debt with him, which were of course stolen by his murderer, or murderers. Harry counseled concealment of the way Mr. Martens had died, until steps could be taken for their recovery, or something learned concerning them.

It would not do to trust too much to the honor of needy borrowers.

As he was leaving, Harry met Julie coming down-stairs, and as he bade her good-night, he said earnestly:

"Julie, we can't bring your poor father back, but if money and brains can do it, we will clear up this mystery."

It was no idle boast. Harry, through the death of his father, whose only heir he was, became, at the age of twenty-one, a wealthy young man.

He thought deeply over the affairs of the Martens family on his way home, and his first act on reaching there, was to send for the head of a famous detective agency.

It was nine o'clock when the message was sent, but Mr. Wilson, the manager, responded promptly.

At the end of an hour, Wilson had heard Harry's story, asked a question or two, and when about leaving, said:

"I will look after these notes, and other indebtedness which you speak of, but you will have to go over the whole story again with the man whom I'll send you to-morrow. He will take up the affair at the Park."

Harry looked annoyed at this, and asked:

"What necessity is there for my seeing your man? It's only delaying the matter, which I would like to have begun at once—to-night, if it were possible!"

"Well, it so happens this man is to be at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, at half-past ten to-night, to meet me. If you wish, you can come with me, and start him to-night."

"Very good! Delays are dangerous—especially in this case. I'll go with you and see him at once."

With the last word, Harry was on his feet and led the way out.

It still lacked a quarter of ten o'clock, so they walked slowly, and on the way Harry learned something about the detective they were going to meet.

"He always insists on seeing and talking to the people he is working for," explained Mr. Wilson, "and he is so valuable, that we cannot refuse to humor him."

"He is a very good man, then?" asked Harry.

"I've never had one as good! He's just the one for this matter, and I've only given him to you because you've been so liberal with me."

Standing outside of the hotel, and a little to

one side of the entrance, was a man about forty-five years of age, roughly dressed and stoop-shouldered—apparently from very laborious work.

The whole appearance of this individual was that of a hod-carrier, except that his clothes were not as good as those usually worn after work is over by that class of men. Yet this was the person who came forward to meet Mr. Wilson.

When he came into the light, Harry looked a little amused at what he considered the "make-up," but was somewhat disgusted when the man responded to his "Glad to know you, sir!" with "At yer service, sur!"

This brogue was kept up whenever, during the recital of Harry's story, Mr. McVeigh (as the detective was introduced) asked a question—which was often.

"Hang it!" said Harry, at last. "Why don't you speak natural?"

"An' ain't I spakin' natheral! But, niver moind that, now! Just tell me—ye'r no relation yerself t' th' family?"

"No. They are old friends of ours."

"An' this is on'y what thay tould ye?"

"Yes," returned Harry, innocently.

"Oh, ho! Thin it's not you at all, at all, but the ladies I musht talk to—them that tould you?"

Harry looked angrily at Wilson.

"The fellow's a fool!" he thought, and was still more angry when Wilson asked McVeigh very meekly:

"Is it really necessary, Mac?"

"Yes, sur."

"But these ladies will not care to discuss their affairs with a stranger—especially in their present frame of mind!" cried Harry, hotly.

"Faith, thin, ye'll have t'wait a bit, or get some wun else," was the calm reply.

Mr. Wilson here interposed and soothed Harry, preventing the angry outburst which he saw coming, and, after some further argument, it was finally arranged that Harry and the "hod-carrier," as the former mentally termed McVeigh, should meet at the Martens residence, early next day.

It required no little persuasion to get Harry to consent to this, but Mr. Wilson finally gained his point.

CHAPTER V.

THE "HOD-CARRIER" ON THE TRAIL.

AFTER hearing the same story from Mrs. Martens as was related by Harry Hammond the night previous, McVeigh asked:

"An' wuz he never in business?"

"No—not that I know of," replied Mrs. Martens.

"An' how did he make his money in the beginnin'? He must have done somethin'," persisted the detective.

"I think, that years and years ago, he owned a distillery in the West. I know his father did."

Mac's eyes sparkled for a moment; then, with a triumphant glance at Harry, he arose, and said he must go.

Half an hour after leaving the Martens residence, Mac, still looking like an old hod-carrier out of work, or taking a holiday, entered the saloon which Austin had contemplated seizing, and called for "a glass o' mixed ale, if ye pl'ase."

The two or three regular hangers-on, after a moment, continued their conversation, which had been interrupted by Mac's entrance.

One of them, a typical young tough of the neighborhood, who was looking at a newspaper, said to the barkeeper:

"I see dat Spanish bloke was buried yest'day. I'll bet Red Leary knows somethin' 'bout that job!"

"Yes, 'n' Kelly, too!" chimed in another.

Here the old hod-carrier, who had been busily filling a short, black pipe, came to the end of the counter to get a light.

To do this he had to pass between the loungers, and in doing so saw it was the "Martinez Mystery," as the newspapers dubbed it, to which the young tough referred.

"Dey wuz all in here togedder—wuzn't dey, Jimmy?"

It was the first speaker again, addressing the bartender, who spoke.

"Look here, Skinny!" exclaimed the latter, fiercely. "You're fellers better mind yer own business! Don't forget dat!"

That closed the conversation. The barkeeper is king in such places, and of such people, and a minute or two later the loungers slouched out.

Having relieved himself, "Jimmy" felt better;

Mac was a stranger, and a cash customer, and he said:

"Drink up, old man! Have another!"

Mac cheerfully obeyed, and, while "Jimmy" was refilling his glass, remarked carelessly:

"Thim gossoons is alwus intherfarin' wud uther paple's bishness. It'd serve them betther t'mind the'r own."

"Ye'r right, old man! An' dey'll get in trouble over it some o' dese days. Well, here's luck!"

"Good luck to ye, sir!"

"Nice old chap, that!" thought the bartender, pleased at the respectful tone, and then, aloud:

"Live 'round here?"

"No. I kem over t' look fur a place in Hudson avenue, 'n' thin I tuk a walk over t' the Park where th' Spanyard wuz found. Did th' find anythin' about him, d'ye know?"

"Naw—'n' I guess they never will! Ye kin bet the fellers that done that job know the'r little book too well t' leave any marks behind 'em!"

The significant look which accompanied the words, caused McVeigh to think "Jimmy" might be a person worth cultivating, and he was about to invite him to drink, when the door was flung open, and a tall, powerful man of about thirty entered.

The detective knew him instantly. It was Red Leary. But, why had he shaved off his mustache?

Leary favored the old man with one sharp glance, and then in response to the barkeeper's respectful query as to what he would take, replied:

"Whisk', of course! Must favor yer own trade, ye know, Jimmy!"

Jimmy joined in the laugh and then, at a nod from Leary, asked Mac what he would drink—at the same time whispering: "Take whisk'!"

"Whisky fur me!" replied Mac, as ordered.

"That's it!" exclaimed Leary. "Stick to the old stuff—specially when it's home-made!"

He was in great humor, had evidently been drinking, and spoke loudly.

The barkeeper looked alarmed, and noticing this, Leary laughed contemptuously.

"What 'r ye afraid of?" he exclaimed. "That duck won't trouble ye' any more, 'n' somebody hit his pardner on the conk last night. He's laid up for awhile I guess!"

Both listeners understood the latter part of what was said; the old man sucked away at his pipe, while Jimmy asked:

"Where's de oder duck?"

"Kelly's watchin' over him now. We fixed him up at th' house the other night. Got him into the Red Light, an' that settled it! Here! Give's another drink, quick! I must git!"

"That's a nice man," remarked the detective, as Leary hurried out, but the barkeeper merely said "Yes," and in a tone which showed that he did not intend to pursue the subject.

"Well, I guess I'll be gettin' home. I'll see ye ag'in mebbe, if I move over," said Mac, after a minute or two.

"That's right! Drop in when ye'r around!" returned the barkeeper, as the old man passed out.

"The Red Light! Now, phwat the devil is goin' an' at the Red Light? I'll have t' go an' see what's up—but he'll know me, now."

He paused on the corner, and looked about him doubtfully.

It was eleven o'clock, and, even in that densely populated district, the children were nearly all at school, while the mothers of them were busy preparing dinner.

The old man started down Hudson avenue, looking sharply into every hallway as he passed along, and, coming to a large tenement, darted in.

Five minutes after the old man had gone into the tenement, a fresh-faced, good-looking young man came out.

It was Mac, but the gray whisker passing from ear to ear under his chin, had disappeared, his black sack coat had turned gray (with a black lining), on his head was a light-colored soft hat, covering black instead of gray hair, and he no longer stooped.

"Now for the Red Light!" he said, and, at rapid gait, started in the direction of Blissville.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAPPED—LIFE OR DEATH?

AND now to return to Quiet Jack Austin, and his partner.

The contemplated seizure was not made, because, after talking it over again, the two detectives agreed it would be better to locate as

many places as possible before moving, and then come down on all at one swoop.

Instead, therefore, Austin next day, early in the afternoon, called at the Red Light, leaving Morris to look after things in the heart of the whisky ring.

At the Red Light, Austin found only Smith and another man present, and the latter left almost immediately after the detective entered.

Mr. Smith was very pleasant, and joined his visitor in a glass of beer.

"I suppose you've come to take a squint at the house?" he said.

"Well—yes. I suppose I may as well do it now," replied Austin. "Have you the key?"

"Yes—here it is, but—"

Smith seemed to hesitate about giving up the key, and this aroused the curiosity and suspicion of the Secret Service officer—just as it was intended it should.

"But what?" he asked. "What's the trouble?"

"Oh, I suppose it's all right!" replied Smith, still a little doubtfully. "Ye see there's a good many things there yet and—Well, they mightn't like a stranger to go over it alone."

Austin felt he was on the right trail, and on the eve of a discovery—and he was.

After waiting a moment for Smith to decide, Austin called for another drink, and when the glasses were placed on the bar, asked:

"Well? What are you going to do about it?"

Smith scratched his head, looked hard at his questioner, and then laid the key on the counter.

"There! Take it—right or wrong!" he exclaimed, irritably.

Austin thanked him and walked across to the suspected house—all suspicions of evil arising from Smith lulled to sleep.

He had been especially anxious to get into this place, because he suspected that not only whisky was being manufactured, but also that from there came the paraphernalia by which others made it.

After entering and locking the door to prevent being disturbed, Austin began his search and was rewarded almost at once.

Right in the room he stood in, covered with a lot of old canvas, Quiet Jack discovered a broken worm, and a lot of separate pieces of piping.

"Sent to be repaired," muttered the detective, and then, with a smile, "Lard rendering, eh?"

There was nothing else in that room, and he passed into a larger one in the rear.

Here he espied a similar pile, covered with canvas, at the end of the room, and hastened toward it.

Had he looked above, he would have seen the face of Red Leary who was watching him through a trap-door in the floor.

Under the second canvas, Austin found five barrels. "Whisky of course," he thought, and was about to bore into it with a small gimlet which he took from his pocket, when he suddenly became conscious that some one was near him—that he was in danger!

In an instant it flashed upon him that he had been trapped; that Smith's reluctance was merely to lull his suspicions, and his hand instantly sought his pocket.

He had awakened too late, however, for before his hand reached his pocket, the floor gave way beneath him and he fell down, down, into the deep cellar.

How long he lay there, Austin never knew, but when he recovered consciousness he was still in the cellar, with his hands and feet tied.

It was pitch dark; he could not see a foot before him; his head had been hurt in the fall and ached terribly; one of his legs, too, felt as though it had been injured, and his mouth was parched with thirst.

"Water! Water!" he cried, but there was no response.

Surely they did not mean to let him die there like a dog?

"Quiet Jack" had been in a great many close corners, but he now, for the first time, fully realized the desperate character of the men he was dealing with.

These men were not only criminals, but some of them of the worst kind—criminals with a good name to keep unstained; men not suspected by the public of the illegal traffic in which they were engaged, and who would do—or have done—anything to prevent the fact becoming known.

Austin's thirst soon became unbearable, and again and again he called for water.

At length the trap-door was opened, and a voice asked, tauntingly:

"How would a little whisky do?"

"Come! Come! Don't play the red Indian!" said another voice. "Bring down some water! And hurry up with that ladder, will ye!"

Austin, lying near the trap-door, now open, saw a ladder put down and five men descended—the first carrying a lantern, and the last a can of water. All wore white masks.

"Now, then—get up!" commanded one, who seemed to be the leader, after cutting the cords about Austin's feet.

Austin endeavored to obey, but fell back with a cry of pain.

"I can't," he said, "my leg is hurt."

"Help him up, Jack!" commanded the big man, who appeared to be the leader, and then, noticing the captive's longing look at the water, motioned it to be given him.

Austin took a long drink, and then, assisted by one of his captors, limped over to a barrel, upon which he was directed to seat himself.

"It's whisky," said the big man, with a harsh laugh. "But I guess you won't say anything about it!"

In spite of his great self-control, the detective shuddered. This boldness appalled him—it could mean nothing but death.

The leader of the party seated himself on a box directly in front of Austin, and said, coolly and deliberately:

"Mister Man, we've got you—caught you like a rat in a trap! We know where you came from, who sent you, and what for. Now, what do you think we're goin' to do with ye?"

Austin shook his head, but did not speak.

Instinctively he had been noting the tone of the man's voice; the latter saw it, and said, with a cruel smile:

"Tryin' t' remember the voice, eh? Well, for two straws I'd show ye' the face belongin' to it!"

"And now t' business! We've got ye safe enough, but we don't exactly want t' put ye out of the way, unless we have t' do it. So, we've concluded t' give ye yer choice of joinin' us or—"

The burly ruffian paused significantly, and looked the balance of the sentence—death!

"If ye join us, ye must swear t' keep quiet about this, and everything else in the future. We'll put ye onto one or two o' the gang that's gettin' too independent, but ye mustn't do nuthin' till ye'r told. Now, what d'ye say?"

"Remember—it's in yer own hands—life or death!"

CHAPTER VII.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO DECIDE.

AUSTIN had foreseen what was coming before the other finished speaking, and was prepared for him.

Next to liberty, time was now the most precious. Morris knew where he had gone, and would hunt him up. He accordingly asked:

"I am a sworn officer of the law; if I break one oath, how can you trust me to keep the other?"

"Never mind that! That's our lookout! What will ye do?"

The detective reflected: he must have time, but how was he to obtain it?"

"Well?" said the big fellow, impatiently.

"I must have time to think! I can't decide in a moment to throw away a reputation it has taken years to build! If you push me now—then go ahead, and do your worst!"

Austin spoke passionately, and saw in an instant he had created a good impression.

Just then one of the men whispered something which none but the leader could hear.

The latter nodded, and turning again to Austin, said:

"It's now nine o'clock. At the same time tomorrow night be ready t' do one thing or the other. Jack, (to the man who had whispered to him) you make him fast to that beam, an' give 'im somethin' t' eat! You boys can go ahead with that job—I'll wait till this is done."

When the other three had gone, the ruffian addressed as "Jack," having first secured Austin's feet, released his hands and gave him some bread and meat—the leader, meantime, sitting with a cocked revolver watching him.

After watching the detective for a few minutes, he said, in what was meant to be a careless tone:

"You didn't think we had ye spotted, did ye? But we knew every move ye made. Ye were in the Park th' mornin'—that man was found, an' then ye went t' th' inquest. Am I right?"

Austin stared at him for a moment in surprise.

What connection had the murder with the whisky business?

"You are right," he slowly replied.

"An' ye were at the inquest? What did ye think of it?"

"I didn't bother thinking—it wasn't my business!"

"Well, you'd better be careful 'bout what ye decide. You've lots o' time, 'n' Jack'll be here if ye want anythin'."

"What part o' the country d'ye come from?" continued the leader.

"Washington—born there."

"Easy seein' it's not Brooklyn—you'd know better than meddle with this business."

"Why?" asked Austin, a little curiously.

"Because there's people behind it—but never mind that now. You'll see why when ye get in the ring."

"Suppose I don't get in?"

"You'd better not suppose any such thing!" was the menacing reply, and then, as if something had suddenly occurred to him, the burly ruffian asked:

"It is whisky ye'r' after?"

"Somebody wants ye right away, Cap!" came the announcement from the trap-door, before Austin could reply to his captor's strange question.

"What the deuce did he ask that for, if he knows so much?" muttered Austin, when the "Cap" and "Jack" had quitted the cellar.

"And that murder, too—what has that to do with the whisky business?"

"It's queer that he should connect the murder and whisky—that is, in this case. If ever I get out of this hole, I'll look into that affair."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE DEATH-TRAP.

REGULARLY every hour the next day, the fellow called "Jack" asked the prisoner if he had arrived at a decision, and as regularly received the answer—"No!"

This, alone, was wearing on the prisoner's nerves, and as night approached he began to despair of Morris's appearing in time to save him.

At length "Jack" propounded the question again, but this time with the addition:

"It's next t' th' last chance—eight o'clock now!"

He was standing close to Austin as he pulled out his watch, and the latter started when he saw the watch held close to the lantern, which the ruffian carried.

All the detective instinct was awake in an instant at the sight of the watch, for, unless greatly mistaken, it was the one which the man found murdered in the Park had taken such pride in exhibiting.

"All right! You've another hour, yet!" said "Jack" significantly, as he climbed through the trap-door, and then Austin heard the street door shut softly.

Fully an hour elapsed before the detective saw his guard again—this time accompanied by two others.

"Time's up! What will ye do?"

It was the big fellow who spoke—the hour of trial had come, and Austin, seeing each one of the three with a drawn revolver, was fully prepared to die, when he answered:

"I'm going to stand by my colors!"

"What? D'ye know what that means?"

"I don't care what it means! That's what I mean!"

The leader's eyes fairly burned through the white mask; he did not speak for a minute or two, but when he did, appeared to be quite calm.

"Better think it over again," he said. "We'll give ye another hour—but not here.—Jack, help him up. Jim, you go up and stand at the top."

Austin's feet were released, and he was helped to the foot of the ladder, where his hands also were released enough to permit him to grasp the rounds.

Slowly, and apparently in great pain, the detective crawled up the ladder, and was helped out by Jim at the top.

"Now then, fasten the cords on his hands," commanded the leader.

This was quickly done, and then in obedience to a signal, Austin was blindfolded and gagged.

"You might take a notion to shout, ye know, if ye saw any one," said the leader.

Austin now gave up all hope; the extra hour was only mentioned to throw him off his guard, and he felt certain he was going to his death.

"Now, then! Off with the rags, and get out!" was the next command, and they started off.

Although it seemed useless, the detective noted the way they were moving, and when

they stopped, he felt certain it was in the rear of the Red Light Saloon.

"Take him t' th' front room," said the harsh voice of the leader, adding—"You can manage it without me. I must go down-town."

Up-stairs they went, but Austin quickly noticed, from the turn of the rickety stairs, that it was to the back and not the front room, he was conducted.

Once inside, he was pushed into an arm-chair, his feet lashed to the legs, and his hands to the arms.

The chair was then dragged toward the corner of the room—to a particular spot it seemed to the prisoner, and then he was left alone.

He was over a trap-door again, he felt, and this time a death-trap.

Just as the men left the room, sounds of a tremendous row reached the floor above—shouts, curses, breaking of glass, and finally pistol shots.

The two ruffians hurried down to the saloon, and as Jack dashed into the bar he was struck by a flying beer glass, receiving a bad cut in the forehead.

This roused his ire, and instead of being a spectator, he sailed in and was fighting like a demon when a half-dozen policemen burst in, and stopped the fight.

The first one arrested was Jack—the cut in his forehead was the prime cause of this, for the blood streaming from it attracted attention at once.

Three times after the uproar began below had ceased, Austin heard a faint noise under his chair; each time the floor seemed to move a little, and he felt it sink and then spring back.

Each time this occurred, Quiet Jack expected to fall through the floor into some noisome pit or sewer, where he would never be seen or heard of again, but the noise did not occur again, and after a little he began to have some hope.

For some reason, he thought, the trap had failed to work, and in this he was right, as will be seen later.

It was probably only prolonging the agony, but time was everything—Morris might come at any moment.

Had he been able to see what occurred in front of the Red Light, shortly after the fight, all hope in his partner would have died.

The sounds under Austin's chair had barely ceased, when Jim came up from the cellar, and walking to the bar called for a drink. He was perspiring freely although very pale, and Smith looked at him curiously, but said nothing.

After taking the drink, Jim walked out of the saloon—halting just outside the door as his eyes fell upon a man across the road, who was gazing curiously at the house in which Austin had been trapped.

It was Morris, looking for his partner, and "Jim" knew him at once.

He was an undersized, weak creature, was "Jim," with a villainous countenance, looking just what he was—a cowardly cut-throat.

He watched Morris, whose movements could be plainly discerned in the bright moonlight, and when the latter went around the corner to get to the rear of the house, followed him—taking what looked like a policeman's short stick from his pocket.

Five minutes later, as Morris was fumbling at the rear door, "Jim" crept up and dealt him a crushing blow on the base of the skull.

Morris fell like a log, and lay like one.

CHAPTER IX.

A NEW BARTENDER AT THE RED LIGHT.

IT was not the strength of the arm that dealt the blow—it was the lead in the stick that did the business for Morris,

After making sure of his work, Jim hurried back to the Red Light, and after whispering a word to Smith, returned to the prostrate man, where he was quickly joined by the latter.

Jim was about to rob Morris when Smith stopped him.

"No—leave everything on him. We'll drop him below here, 'n' if the police get him first, they'll swear he fell. If any one else tries to go through him, you can easy scare 'em off."

The reasoning was good, if not pleasant, and Jim desisted.

The coast being clear, the two rascals carried Morris to the next corner below, where they dropped him, and Jim stationed himself where he could command a view of the body of the man, whom neither he nor Smith were at all certain would ever recover his senses.

A few minutes after this the watcher was surprised to see two policemen approaching.

"Two!" he muttered, as the officers bent to examine the prostrate man. "Two! I wonder what's up to-night?"

Seeing the officers carrying away Morris, he returned to the Red Light, and related to Smith what had taken place.

"Ha! That's why so many of them were here awhile ago! Somebody's given away the fight to-night. We'll have to send 'em word t' keep away!"

"A fight! Who is it?" asked Jim, excitedly.

"Miller and Grogan," replied Smith, adding: "Some one must stop 'em from comin'. Can ye go down t' South Brooklyn?" It's worth a fiver."

Jim would like to have earned the money; he was only the tool—the slave of the others, and got little or none of the spoil, but he did not dare leave—in fact, this reminded him that he should be up-stairs now, looking after the prisoner.

"Come!" said Smith, noticing his hesitation, "I'll look after him, and it won't take ye long, anyhow. Besides, if there's a raid they'll find him, sure."

The reasoning suited Jim's inclinations to a dot; it would be a good excuse, too, and after taking a drink he started off, saying:

"Ye might give 'im a bite 'n' a drink, when ye git a show."

And thus the two men commissioned to put him "out of the way," failed to perform their murderous work, and Austin had, all unknown to himself, and to those who had decreed his death, gained a respite of twenty-four hours.

"Jim" delivered his message all right, and then got very drunk with the sports, who were grateful for the warning.

The other party, however, arrived long before the appointed hour, and the police saw them enter.

After waiting until past one o'clock, the captain concluded that the entire crowd was inside, and placing several men around the house, entered himself with a half-dozen men at his back.

Smith was behind the bar busy serving his guests, but aside from that, and a little loud talking, the captain could see nothing wrong.

In his chagrin, he ordered Smith to put on his coat.

"I'll take you anyhow," he said, and then ordered the grinning sports to "clear out!"

Smith protested, but it was useless.

"It's half-past one, now!" said the captain, who was very angry at the way he had been fooled. "Bring him along!"

When Smith locked the door he gave the key to one whom he could trust, with instructions to deliver it to his daughter, Mrs. Kate Leary, at once. It was too late to obtain bail, and he knew he would not be free in time to open the "Red Light" in the morning.

The key was duly delivered to Mrs. Leary, who lived near by, and the "Red Light" was opened by her at the usual hour next morning.

Little business was done at the "Red Light" until night, and Mrs. Leary had but three or four customers during the forenoon.

About noon, a fresh-faced, good-looking, and also rather innocent-looking man, apparently about thirty, entered and called for a glass of beer.

It was McVeigh, and the brogue was plainly discernible in his speech.

He drank his beer slowly, watching the woman behind the bar all the time.

As he finished his beer Mac said:

"Dye know, ma'am, where a poor fellow could get a job about here?"

Kate Leary was even then a shrewd, sharp, woman, but the innocent face and brogue took her in. Besides she wanted a man behind the bar.

"What can you do?" she asked with a smile.

"Oh, anythin', ma'am! I used t' ddraw beer meself onc't in th' ould country."

"Indeed! Do you think you could 'tend bar here?"

"Indeed I do, ma'am! Will ye give me a chance, pl'ase?"

Kate Leary laughed—the fellow's anxiety to try his hand in the Red Light, so quiet now, and so like another Inferno at night, aroused her.

"Well," she said, "I need a man just now. I don't know for how long, but, if you will take the chances, go up-stairs and you will find an apron in the top drawer of the bureau, in the front room overhead."

Mac started off immediately, but on reaching the head of the stairs tried the rear door, instead of going to the front, as directed.

The door yielded; he entered, and saw Austin sitting bound to the chair, and almost dead from weakness.

Whipping out a knife, Mac severed the cords, and then forced some whisky from a pocket flask down Austin's throat.

This brought the Secret Service man to his senses, and in a few minutes he had hurriedly given a brief outline of his experience.

"Just skip down-shaft an' wait fur me 'round th' corner," said Mac, when he finished, and, after taking another drink of the liquor to brace himself up, Austin quietly stole down-stairs and out of the Red Light.

A minute or two after Austin had gone, Mac appeared at the bar with a white apron in his hand.

"I say, ma'am!" he said, in a very embarrassed way. "Could you let me out a mint or two fur me dinner? I furgot all about it 'til now!"

"Yes—certainly! But, for Heaven's sake, don't be all day about it!" and Mrs. Leary laughed at the half-frightened, half-horrified expression of the new bartender's countenance.

Mac immediately left the "Red Light," and around the corner met Austin.

A full hour elapsed before the new bartender returned.

"What's your name?" demanded Mrs. Leary, when he came behind the bar, where she was sitting.

"Mike Cl'ary, ma'am. But the' call me Mac."

"Well, Mac, if you ever spend as much time again at your dinner, you won't last long in the 'Red Light'!"

And, when Red Leary returned early that evening he found a new man behind the bar.

"Where's Smith?" he asked, looking at the new man in surprise.

"I don't know him, sorr!" was the reply.

"And who put you here?"

"Missus L'ary, sir! An' a fine lady she is!" answered Mac, looking straight at her questioner.

Red Leary saw something had gone wrong, and walked out of the saloon.

On arriving home he learned what had occurred during his absence as far as his wife knew.

He then secured bail for Smith, which was only a nominal affair, and as he left the latter, said:

"You might as well keep that duck! He's pretty green, but you can make use of him. See what you can get him for, and make him board with Kate!"

When Smith returned to the "Red Light," he found Mac busily engaged washing glasses, and this pleased him.

Making himself known as the proprietor, Smith engaged the new man permanently, at a nominal sum, and thus McVeigh, the detective, became Smith's—or rather Red Leary's bartender.

The latter did not, after going through the house on his arrival there, suspect for an instant that the detective had escaped the trap-door. Smith did not know it and, of course, could not tell him what Jim could, if present, but Jim was still drunk in South Brooklyn, and when he did return was too much afraid to do so.

Smith, of course, had told Leary about Morris.

CHAPTER X.

A FATAL FIND.

THREE days had passed without any report from McVeigh, and Hammond began to become disgusted.

He haunted the office of the detective agency like a restless spirit, and on the third day he relieved his mind considerably by saying to the manager:

"That man, McVeigh, is evidently just what I thought he was from the beginning—a fool! I've told you already to spare no expense—now put a man on this case! If necessary put a half-dozen on it—but for God's sake, hurry up!"

Mr. Wilson endeavored to pacify his client.

It was not unusual, he said, for Mac to run a week without reporting—in fact, they never heard from him until he had discovered something of importance.

"So, evidently, he has found nothing in the last three days! A valuable man, truly!"

Mr. Hamilton had been very liberal, had given the agency a *carte blanche* as to expenses, but this irritated the manager, and he was about to tell his client that the case must be conducted as they thought proper, or taken somewhere else, when a messenger-boy entered with a letter.

It was from McVeigh, and read as follows:

"I've got a job as barkeeper over here in Brooklyn, in a place called 'The Red Light,' and will call on you when I get my day off—probably in a day or two. There's nothing to tell you as yet, except that some of the dead man's personal property is very near here at this moment, I believe."

There was neither date, address nor signature to the letter, but Mr. Wilson smiled triumphantly as he read the letter to Harry.

"You see," he said, "Mac's on the trail already!"

But Mr. Hammond would not be pleased at anything that day—the report was too ambiguous, the delay too great he said, and then, thinking over the report of McVeigh, Harry crossed Fulton Ferry.

He had no motive, not even curiosity, in visiting the scene of the murder, but shortly after crossing, Harry found himself in the City Park, sitting upon the identical bench where the murdered man was found.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and Austin, who had been free just about three hours, was already back in the illicit whisky center.

The conversation he had had with "Mac" was very much to the point; in the one hour they were together each had learned the business of the other, and Austin departed fully satisfied that the "Red Light" was in good hands.

At first he had intended to raid both the Red Light and the house opposite, but after hearing Mac's story abandoned that idea.

Disguised as a sailor, he passed through the Park, on his way to the place he and Morris had contemplated seizing, and as he passed, glanced at Hammond sitting on the now famous settee.

The face of the latter looked somehow familiar, and for a moment Austin paused—hesitating whether he should sit down or not, but he was too anxious to go on; he wondered what had become of Morris, and hoped to meet him where he was going.

Had he waited, he would have seen Hammond arise from the bench, and throw himself on the grass back of where he had been sitting.

Hammond put his hands back under his head, and immediately after came to a sitting posture with something in them.

It was a pair of gloves, rolled in a ball, and he was about to toss them away, but on second thought put them in his pocket.

Shortly after Hammond arose and returned home—forgetting all about the gloves, and a most dangerous "find" they proved to be.

Harry was a fine looking fellow, elegantly dressed, apt to attract attention anywhere, and came under the notice of two local Hawks, while sitting on the bench—but they, too, failed to see him pick up the gloves.

This amounted to nothing at the time, but proved of fearful consequence later.

Next day, late in the afternoon, Harry received a message from Wilson, saying McVeigh would be at the Martens residence that evening at eight.

Promptly at the time named McVeigh arrived, looking precisely as when last seen, even to the broken-brimmed derby.

He did not sit down, but stood near the door while making his report—and he began the moment he entered.

"Mister Martens had a watch?" he said, interrogatively.

"Yes," replied Harry.

Mac paid not the slightest attention to him; he simply looked at the ladies, and did not speak again until Mrs. Martens replied in the affirmative.

"Kin ye describe it?" he asked, taking a notebook out of his pocket.

"Julie can do so better than I can," replied Mrs. Martens.

Mac looked inquiringly at Julie, and the last began at once:

"It was of gold, made with four knobs, which being at right angles to each other, made it look almost square, and there were nine diamonds set in the back of the case."

"That's it! Look at this!" and Mac handed his note-book to Hammond.

The latter read from the note-book an almost exact repetition of Julie's words.

Everybody looked astonished—even Harry, who was determined not to be pleased at anything.

"Well?" asked Harry.

"Well, I guess I'll be off! The time is nearly up! Good-night! Ye'll hear from me soon ag'in," and before any one could speak, McVeigh had gone—the door closing behind him before they realized that he had left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

A DEADLY COMBAT.

MEANTIME, Austin's escape had been discovered by Leary—who was the big man of the party that had entrapped him; and it came about thus:

Jim, after getting over his drunk, returned to the Red Light, but dared not say anything until the return of Jack, who was released through Leary's influence.

Mac was talking to Jim when Jack entered. He stared in surprise at the new barkeeper, and looked inquiringly at Jim.

"Hello, Kelly! Got out!" exclaimed Jim.

"Yes," replied Jack, still looking askance at the new barkeeper.

"This is th' new man—helpin' th' boss out," said Jim. "This is Jack Kelly, Mac!"

Mac was duly grateful for the introduction, and stood treat.

Just then Leary entered, following Kelly from the jail.

After another drink, Leary called Jack to a side table.

"Kelly," he said, "that went through all right?"

"I don't know nothin' about it. They grabbed me before I could do th' job!"

"What! D'y'e mean t' say ye didn't see it through?" demanded Leary, angrily.

"How could I? Don't ye see, they grabbed me before I could do anythin'? Jim put it through, I suppose."

"Jim! Why he couldn't spring the trap in a year! Jim! Jim—come here!"

Jim came over, trembling. He knew instinctively what was coming.

"Jim, did ye put that job through all right?" demanded Leary.

There was no use lying, and Jim did not dare to anyhow. He dreaded Leary.

"No; I couldn't pull the trap!" he replied sheepishly.

"Then what became of the man?" thundered Leary, looking from one to the other.

Neither spoke—Kelly had been in jail, and Jim had been drunk almost up to date.

Leary was now furious, and after exhausting his vocabulary of epithets, ordered the instant removal of everything in the house across the road, to the cellar of the "Red Light."

It was quite lonely in that vicinity, and there was little danger of any one observing what was done.

"Put them in the sub cellar, and see that you fix the trap right this time!" he ordered, and after seeing the work started, Leary came to the bar.

What had become of the chair to which the prisoner had been tied?

This was what puzzled him, and after ordering a drink, he asked:

"Ever been up-stairs?"

"Yis, sorr! Tu' furst day I wuz here I wint up t' get an aprin."

"Back or front?"

"Th' frunt, sorr! That's where I wuz tould t' go."

"Humph! Well, there's a chair missin' from the back room. If you run across it, just tell me, d'y'e hear?"

"Yis, sorr! Is it your chair?" asked the barkeeper, innocently.

Leary grinned in spite of himself.

"Never mind that. And, look here! Let me or Smith know th' first time any one comes nosin' around here, or across the way—specially if he's a—" and Leary described Austin closely and carefully, as he had last seen him.

It did not occur to Leary that Austin would be apt to change his appearance; in fact, after the first outburst, he began to think he had scared the Secret Service man so badly, that nothing more would be heard of him. Otherwise, why had there not been a descent upon both houses by the police?

Austin's treatment, and what he had seen, would certainly warrant it, and yet he had been gone three days without making any trouble.

Burglaries had been numerous of late in the City of Churches, and the night Jack returned he, together with Leary, Jim, and two strangers to the Red Light *habitués*, but whom Mac immediately recognized as second-rate New York cracksmen, left the Red Light about closing time, and did not return until after the saloon was opened next morning.

All hands took a drink of whisky, and then went up-stairs—except one of the strangers, Bullard by name, who stayed behind to get two more drinks.

This man, a big, powerful fellow, looked as

weak as a child, and his hand shook as he poured out the whisky.

Mac had of course observed all this, and when the morning paper was delivered, scanned it closely, with the result that he found two burglaries had been attempted and a murder committed the previous night.

A man who had been awakened by the burglars, and came down to his parlor, was shot dead. He was well to do and highly respected in his neighborhood, and, so the paper stated, the police, at length aroused to the necessity of apprehending these midnight marauders, were close upon the heels of the murderer.

About noon the men above returned to the bar, and the first thing Leary sought was the paper, reading with great attention the article referred to, while the others were drinking—Bullard still very pale and nervous.

When he had finished reading, Leary called the others into the back room, where Mac could hear him reading the article aloud.

There was a dead silence for a few minutes after Leary stopped reading, and the reader was the first to break it.

"Bill [Bullard] you'll have to skip," he declared. "It'll be too hot for you here, for awhile. Let's go up-stairs an' divide, 'n' then you'd better 'light out lively!"

The entire party then went up-stairs, and Mac heard them enter the front room—directly overhead.

For some time everything was quiet above, and Mac stood looking out of the window.

It was the quiet time of the day, and the dark, gloomy weather, together with the cold, piercing rain that was falling in torrents, rendered business duller than ordinary, but Mac could not risk going up-stairs; Smith was liable to come in at any minute.

Suddenly, he heard loud talking in the room above, which quickly grew louder and more threatening.

Then came the sound of blows, and, in an instant, Mac realized that the men above were fighting over the division of the spoils of the recent burglaries.

From the uproar, it was evident that a terrific struggle was going on between the five men, and it bad not lasted five minutes before the listener heard some one fall, instantly followed by the crack of a pistol, and another fall, and a second later another fall.

Then, all was silent for a few minutes.

Presently, the door above was opened and shut with a bang, and Mac heard the heavy tread of Red Leary descending the stairway.

"Get a pail of water and a mop, and go up-stairs!" he ordered, sternly, and Mac, anxious to get a look at the slaughter-house, hurriedly set about obeying, while Leary, striding behind the bar, helped himself to whisky.

He looked like one who had been engaged in deadly combat: his usually florid face was pale as death, and he spoke through clinched teeth; his clothes were torn, and there was a deep cut over his eye.

Evidently Bullard and his mate had made a hard fight for life.

The moment the water-pail was full, Mac hurried up-stairs, and entered without knocking.

From the sounds which had reached Mac, he expected to see the results of a terrible combat, but his imagination did not border on the reality.

The front room, which had been fitted up as a living room, contained a half-dozen chairs and a table. Every one of the chairs had been broken, as had two heavy cuspids, and a leg had been wrenched from the table, and from the quantity of blood on this, it evidently had done deadly service.

In one corner of the room lay Jim, with the blood streaming from a horrible wound in the forehead; along side of him lay Johnson, Bullard's mate, apparently dead, though there was no visible wound, and leaning across the overturned table was Jack Kelly, a ghastly sight, with the blood oozing from his head, and streaming over his pale face.

Mac had barely time to take in this, when he heard Leary's step coming up-stairs, and turned quickly to begin mopping up the blood.

As he turned he almost fell over Bullard, lying near the wall, with a bullet-hole between his eyes, from which the blood was slowly running.

Mac shuddered; he was a brave man, but this was too much like a slaughter-house.

Leary entered in a moment with a pitcher of water and a bottle of whisky, and, beginning with Jack, gave each of the men a glass of the liquor, except Bullard. He was past the aid of whisky or anything else.

Jack was the first to revive, and when he opened his eyes Leary ordered Mac, who had been working like a beaver, to go down-stairs.

"Smith's there now," he said. "Send him up with a couple towels, and another pail of water."

CHAPTER XII.

QUIET JACK MAKES TWO CALLS.

HALF an hour elapsed before Smith came down again, accompanied by Jack, whose head had been bandaged, and the blood washed off his face.

"Some brandy!" said Smith, who looked as pale as Jack, and after each had disposed of a very stiff drink, Smith said:

"I suppose I'll have t' go down and help ye?"

"Yes, let's get it over."

In a minute or two, Mac, listening intently, heard a sharp noise above, like the violent closing of a door, followed, a moment later, by a dull sound from below, as of a heavy body falling into the cellar.

"Bullard!" was Mac's mental comment, and, accustomed as he was to scenes of violence, the detective shuddered.

Shortly after, Leary came from above, and Kelly and Smith from below.

"Bring over a barrel of quicklime an' chuck it in there to-night," said Leary to Smith, and then addressing Kelly:

"Jack, you'd better get up-stairs again! I'll send up some stuff for the three of ye. Keep an eye on him, 'n' if he tries any funny business, drop him!"

After Jack had gone up-stairs, Leary told Mac to go to his house and get three or four blankets.

"And tell her to bring around a big basket o' grub!" he added, as Mac went out the door.

This suggested a plan to Mac's fertile brain, although he did not put it into operation then.

He was a prime favorite with Kate Leary, and these verbal messages were frequent; why not go some day, when Leary was away, and search his room for the missing papers and valuables?

When he returned with the bundle of blankets, Leary was alone in the Red Light.

"Look here, Mac!" he said, "you saw a good deal up-stairs?"

Mac nodded.

"Well, just remember that if even a whimper of that comes out, ye'll wake up some morning with yer throat cut! Now take them up, and leave them at the door."

There was no doubt of the brutal earnestness of the threat, and Mac obeyed the order with alacrity.

Not that Mac feared Leary—'twas himself, his own temper, he feared. He had seen so much of the brute's character, that he was afraid Leary would goad him into shooting him down before he was ready to close the job he had in hand.

Next day, Mac started to put part of his plan into operation, by writing to Austin, asking him to call at the Red Light.

Johnson, the wounded burglar, was looking sullen and revengeful over the loss of his friend, and Mac thought perhaps he could be induced to talk.

Austin had just returned from visiting Morris, when he received the message.

The police having found the Secret Service badge on the latter, notified the Department in Washington, and through the Department Austin had learned Morris's whereabouts.

Immediately on receipt of the message, Quiet Jack prepared himself for the visit, and an hour later a good-looking negro, dressed in a cheap suit of flashy clothing, entered the Red Light.

Red Leary, sitting one side talking to Jack, scarcely noticed the new-comer, until the latter, in true negro style, pushed back his hat.

In doing this, Austin moved back his wig a trifle, showing a streak of white about his forehead, which Leary's keen eyes quickly noted, with a start of surprise.

Mac, standing with his back to the counter and facing the mirror, saw the movement and the cause.

Taking a card from his pocket, and apparently continuing a conversation with the negro, he said:

"Well, gimme yer name and address, an' I'll see what I can do."

Austin immediately saw something was wrong and mumbled a reply, while Mac wrote as follows:

"Your wig is pushed back! Leary has seen it! Get out quick!"

"That's right—isn't it?" asked Mac, showing him the card.

Austin nodded, and with a "Good-day, sir!" got out before Leary could interfere.

Leary became suspicious at once.

"Let's see that card, Mac!" he said.

But "Mac" was not to be caught; before writing the card he had shown Austin, he had written another bearing the address: "Washington Janes, No. 122 Thompson street, New York," for seeing the sudden and suspicious start of Leary, he knew there would have to be something to show after Austin was gone.

Leary looked at the card, and returned it only half satisfied.

"What does it mean?" he asked.

"Just where th' poor devil lives, sorr—that's all!"

"And what's that got to do with you? D'y'e know him?"

"Devil a bit, sorr! He just axed if I would take his number, an' let him know if I saw a chance for him anywhere."

But Leary was suspicious now, and while he said nothing more he was doing a deal of thinking. He had seen the white skin—what brought it under a black coloring?

There was good reason now to be suspicious of everybody, and Mac quickly saw he was under a cloud.

Meantime, the negro was hurrying home. Now that he had slipped up on the "Red Light," he was determined to push the whisky men in the lower district.

Once home, Austin's face reappeared from the coloring, and very shortly after he was at the Second Precinct Station House.

Old Captain Craft, then a fairly young man, was at the desk, and, after hearing what Austin had to say, brought him into his own office.

"How many men do you suppose you'll need, Mr. Austin?" he asked.

"I've got four places to cover," replied Austin. "How many do you think necessary? You know the people."

"Three men will be enough to each place, I guess," said the captain. "Now give me the points for each, in writing, so that the head of each party will know what he has to do, and just where he has to go."

Austin wrote the requisite directions, and at 8 o'clock that evening, (it was Saturday) thirteen men left the station house—one party of four and three others of three each.

"An unlucky number," muttered one, and it was—to a certain extent.

Austin's party headed for a grogery in Little Water street, which, notwithstanding its poor appearance, he had reason to believe was putting out more goods in a week than it took in, in a year.

It was in the middle of a block, in a basement, and the small bar was full when Austin entered with the three men in citizens' clothes.

One of the officers was a member of the Clan-na-Gael; so was Ned Shanley, the proprietor, and a moment after entering, the latter received the danger signal, followed by a significant look at Austin.

Shanley was at loss to know what it meant; whisky never struck him, and a more important matter was on hand at the time.

In a minute, even while Austin was calling for a drink, the whisper had gone from man to man, (every man at the bar was a member of the Clan-na-Gael,) that a spy was present—and that spy Austin.

While standing at the bar waiting to be served, a man fell back against Quiet Jack, and, on regaining his feet, angrily demanded an apology.

Austin, unfortunately, began to remonstrate, and a minute later was stretched on the floor by a blow from the man he had offended.

For ten minutes, the place was a perfect bedlam. The police, following strict orders, drew their sticks and protected Austin—that is; two of them did. The third man fell almost as soon as Austin.

In falling, Austin's badge came off and one of the dozen assailants picked it up, and, guessing the object of the call, shoved it over to Shanley. The latter, who had been a silent non-combatant, immediately pressed a button, and ten barrels of whisky were sent on their way to the East River; the still, then not in operation, was removed in portions to various places in the vicinity, and Shanley, being safe, began to inquire what all the trouble was about.

"Unlock that door!" he cried. "Call an officer—the first that passes! I want to know what this is all about!"

In an instant one of the policemen, a tall, slim-built fellow, jumped to the door.

"Take the side door, Pete!" he cried, and

throwing back his coat, continued: "Ned Shanley, you just pick that man up! That one! (pointing to Austin, whose head had struck the foot-rail), and see that he recovers quick, or you'll be sorry for it!"

Ten minutes after, the party left Shanley's, convinced that there was nothing there, but not by any means satisfied that there had not been.

All three of the other raids, however, had been successful, and that night whisky flowed down the gutters of Irishtown like water.

"Neilly, the policeman who took command when Austin fell, helped the latter to his hotel before leaving him.

The raids struck terror into the whisky ring; machinery was smashed, or removed, and whisky thrown out in every direction—everyone expecting his turn would come next, for the former "protectors" seemed not only unable to protect, but could not even warn.

But for some time every thing was quiet; confidence was restored, the stills were again in full blast, and the owners working in fancied security before the next raid came.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRESTED FOR THE MURDER.

FURTHER than the discovery of Martens's watch in Kelly's possession, and that the "Red Light," as well as Leary's house, was full of stolen goods, the detective agency had been able to learn practically nothing, and Hammond was growing impatient.

Two weeks had elapsed since Mac had reported, when there came a message from him asking that the pawn-shops, and certain "fences," be searched for Martens's watch—it was no longer in Kelly's possession!

"This is progressing crab-fashion!" exclaimed Hammond, on learning of the message. "We are worse off now than we were at the beginning! You must do something at once, if it takes the whole office! Cost what it may—do something!"

Regarding the murder part of it, Harry was correct: but Wilson's acquaintance among banks, and bankers, had enabled him to locate several notes payable to Martens, now, of course, the property of the banks that discounted them.

Strangely enough, too, these notes were all made by men in the whisky trade—small jobbers, and retailers!

Wilson also learned that there was twenty thousand dollars insurance on the life of Martens, although no policy could be found. This was payable to his daughter Julie.

In view of this, Wilson would have been justified in remonstrating against the injustice of Hamilton's remarks, but he had noticed a change in his client recently, and ascribed his irritation to worry, and anxiety to have the matter cleared up.

The true cause of Harry's trouble was a new acquaintance of the Martens family—a handsome, well-dressed man of about thirty, who called about a week previous to pay a small sum, which he said was due Mr. Martens on a note.

He had announced himself as Manuel Rodriguez, and was singularly agreeable, though unbusiness-like, regarding the note, which, of course, could not be found.

Mrs. Martens promised to make another search for the missing note, and Rodriguez was invited to call again—which he did. Indeed, before the week was over, he was on quite a friendly footing, and no longer needed the note as an excuse for calling.

Although nothing in the way of courtship had passed between Julie and Harry, the latter had come to regard her as his property—to be claimed when the proper time arrived, and he noted the good impression made by the newcomer upon both aunt and niece, with great displeasure.

Harry was angry, worried, irritated, by the interest taken by the Martens in the stranger—Julie, especially, seemed fascinated by him.

After leaving the detective agency, Harry went to Brooklyn, and visited the scene of the murder, as he now did quite frequently.

All unknown to himself, Harry's every movement was now being carefully watched by the Brooklyn detectives, who were beginning to suspect him of the murder of Martinez, and just at this time his habits changed; he became reckless and somewhat dissipated, and this, with his constant haunting of the spot where the murder was committed, excited suspicion.

After returning from Brooklyn that evening, Harry called at the Martens residence, and received a warm welcome from Mrs. Martens and Julie.

He felt correspondingly happy, and became

his former self until there came a ring of the door-bell, and Mr. Rodriguez entered.

Up to this moment Julie, too, was as she had formerly been, frank, free and engrossed in everything that Harry said, but, as the needle turns to the magnet, so she changed on the entrance of the Spaniard.

Magnetism, mesmerism, hypnotism, or whatever it was, Julie's attention was given to Rodriguez, and it enraged Harry, although had the latter looked closely, he would have seen it was not, as he thought, love.

A few minutes after Rodriguez's arrival, Harry arose and bade the company "good-night." He was wearing the same suit of clothes he had on the day he picked up the gloves, and, as he pulled out his handkerchief, they fell to the floor.

Rodriguez, all grace and politeness, picked them up, and as he did so started, but, recovering himself, handed them to Harry with a sharp, suspicious glance.

Next morning, the Brooklyn detectives received an anonymous letter saying that the gloves of the man found murdered in the City Park were in the possession of Hammond!

Harry spent a bad night after leaving the Martens residence, and did not leave home until late next day, but, when he did get out, went as usual to the detective agency, and from there wandered over to Brooklyn, and to the Park.

He was not there long when he became aware that he was being watched, and, uneasy under the surveillance, Harry arose to leave, but before he had gone ten paces, two men were at his heels, and just outside the gate one of them tapped him on the shoulder, saying:

"Mr. Hammond I would like to see your gloves!"

It was in the early autumn, and Harry, not being very fastidious, carried none.

"I have none," he said, too surprised to resent the apparently unwarranted demand.

"Oh, yes you have, Mr. Hammond!" said one of the detectives, and, before Harry could prevent him, pulled the gloves out of his pocket.

"You might as well come along quietly!" said the other, snapping a pair of handcuff's on his wrists, and before he could realize it, Harry was lodged in the Second Precinct Station House.

At the station-house the gloves were examined, and, on being opened, a diamond pin belonging to Martinez, (or Martens), was found in the inner one.

CHAPTER XIV.

HARRY IS HOPEFUL—THE "HOD-CARRIER" HILARIOUS.

ONCE again the Martinez murder came to the front in the newspapers. It was no longer a mystery, as far as the identity of the murdered man was concerned, and the papers teemed with theories as to the motive of the murderer.

Mrs. Martens and Julie received the first news of the arrest, from Rodriguez, who called that evening, but notwithstanding Harry's possession of the gloves and pin, would not listen to the slightest intimation of his being the murderer. They believed his story regarding the finding of the gloves, and expressed the most implicit faith in his innocence. What motive could he have?

Rodriguez looked rather discomfited, and said, apparently somewhat embarrassed:

"Then you have not heard, Miss Martens, that you are supposed to be the motive?"

"I am supposed to be the motive!" exclaimed Julie in astonishment.

"Yes, that is, one paper says your father objected to his attentions to you; that they quarreled, and—and he killed your father!"

Julie blushed and paled again, but answered bravely that Mr. Hammond had never paid any attentions to her, other than those which would come naturally in the course of a friendship which had existed from the time they were children.

She was very excited, and the influence which Rodriguez appeared to have gained over her, was no longer visible.

Quick to appreciate this, Rodriguez, after offering to escort the ladies next day to Brooklyn, to visit Hammond, said "good-night"—looking decidedly out of temper when his offer was declined.

Next day, Harry had four visitors—the first being Mac, looking the same as ever, and to him the prisoner accorded a very cool reception, but that didn't worry Mac the "hod-carrier."

He asked several questions, and finally:

"Mister Hammond, did anybody know ye had them gloves? Did ye ever take them out?"

"No—Hold on! yes, I pulled them out of

my pocket accidentally, night-before last. But why do you ask that?"

"Never mind that, now! Who saw them?"

A little puzzled, Harry told Mac how the gloves had fallen out of his pocket, and were picked up by Rodriguez.

Then followed questions as to who the latter was; how long he had known the Martens family, and how he had formed their acquaintance.

"Well," said Mac, when he had been informed on all these points, "well, it's a mighty good job fur us that ye wor' arrested!"

"Eh! What's that?"

"Oh, av coorse, ye don't like t' be locked up, but it's wan more clew to work on. Shure, ye'r' not fool enough t' think thim omadhauns saw the gloves in yer pocket before arresting ye? How did they know the gloves weren't yer own?"

"What the deuce are you driving at? Do you mean that some one told them I had the gloves?"

"Exactly, Misther Hammond! An' I'll ate me hat, if it wasn't your friend, Misther Rod!"

"By Jove! It looks like it, don't it?"

"Faith, ye can lay yer life on it! But just don't worry for a bit, an' mebbe we'll change things a little. I've got t' be off now, they've sint from the office fur me, but ye'll hear frum me soon."

Mac had gone only a short time, when Harry's mother, accompanied by Mrs. Martens and Julie, appeared at his cell door.

Julie burst into tears, on seeing him behind the grated door, and sobbed:

"Harry! Harry! But for me, you would not be here!"

Harry, not having seen the paper containing the theory based on his "attentions" to Julie, misunderstood her, but his mother quickly set him right, and he laughed the visitors into a better frame of mind, on learning the supposed motive of the murder.

Mrs. Hammond had called on a famous criminal lawyer before coming to Brooklyn, and Mr. Bowe was Harry's next visitor.

He listened attentively to Harry's statement and asked a great many questions, to all of which satisfactory answers were returned—except one, but that was a question of the most vital importance.

Harry could not account for his whereabouts on the night of the murder!

Mr. Bowe shook his head gravely on hearing this, and declared that this point must be cleared up.

"I would have you out in two hours, but for that!" he said, "and you must endeavor to remember where you were. Many a man has been found guilty on weaker evidence than that against you. I shall put a first-class detective on your trail, and you must aid me by telling him all you can remember. He will call on you to-morrow."

Next day Mac called again, this time meeting Harry's salutation with a broad grin.

"I've come frum Misther Bowe t' get a shatement of yer," he said.

"What! Are you the man he spoke of?"

"Yes, I wuz hired yesterda', but, av coorse, it won't cost him anythin'!" replied Mac, with another grin.

"Well—what are you going to do?" demanded Harry.

"I don't know yet. I must know first why ye won't account for where ye were the night o' th' murder!"

"What do you mean?"

"Just that an' nothin' else! I know ye had nayther hand nor part in it, but that won't do. I've got t' prove it. I made him (Bowe) repate wurd fur wurd what passed between ye, an' I noticed that it wasn't that ye couldn't but wouldn't say where ye war that night. Now, will ye tell me?"

Mac spoke earnestly and impressed Harry, for the first time, favorably.

For five minutes the latter thought deeply; then he said:

"Mac! Get admission in here and I'll tell you something!"

Mac had no difficulty in obtaining admission to the cell, and for a half-hour he and Harry conversed earnestly.

When Mac left he looked bright and cheerful, and slapping Harry on the shoulder said, laughingly:

"Shure it's a mighty fine mare's nest they've found! Faith it's nurse garris, not detectives, th'ought t' be—God help them!"

Harry, too, smiled and looked quite cheerful.

Immediately on leaving the jail, Mac hurried away to meet Austin, who was waiting for him further down-town.

They had not given up the idea of searching

Red Leary's residence, and, as he (Leary) was to be in New York that afternoon, Mac decided that the search should be made that day.

Meeting Austin at the place appointed, a consultation was held, and then Mac hurried back to the Red Light.

He had been away almost all of the past two days—burying "the only fri'nd he had in New York,"—and he took good care to pick out a man whose death was announced in the newspapers.

Immediately on his arrival, Smith, who was behind the bar, said he was going out for a few hours, and would return during the afternoon, when Mac could go off for an hour or two—which just suited Mac.

It was quite some time, before Smith saw his barkeeper again.

CHAPTER XV.

A FIGHT FOR LIFE.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, when Austin reached the Red Light.

As expected, there was no one in the den except Mac, but, as a matter of precaution, Quiet Jack had disguised himself with an auburn wig and whiskers, and wore a very cheap suit of clothes, altering his appearance so much that Mac did not know him until he spoke.

"That's a fine suit!" said Mac, laughingly. "Yes—the regular prison rig; the kind they give convicts when leaving!"

Mac then informed Austin that Smith would not return for a couple hours, and that, of course, nothing could be done until then.

They were sitting—Mac facing the door, and Austin with his back to it—discussing how the search should be made, when Leary suddenly appeared at the doorway and stood for a moment looking in at Mac.

Mac returned his glance quite calmly, and while so doing opened his mouth slightly, and without moving his lips, uttered one word—"Leary," barely loud enough for Austin to hear, but that was sufficient. Quiet Jack was on guard in a moment.

Motioning Mac to come to the door, Leary asked:

"Who is the fellow with the suit?"

On the spur of the moment, and with Austin's remarks about the suit still fresh in his mind, Mac replied:

"Just out of prison, I guess!"

"Hum! Suppose we have a look at him."

Leary entered, and taking a seat opposite Austin, invited the latter to drink.

"Just out?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Austin, not knowing exactly what to say, but the next question gave him the cue.

"What were ye in for?"

"Burglary!" replied the other, promptly.

Leary regarded him curiously: possibly he could use this fellow.

"Where were ye?"

"Trenton—for ten years! I had four more, but skipped out last week."

"Escaped!" exclaimed Leary, admiringly.

"Yes. I can't touch Jersey ag'in for a while."

This suited Leary, and he invited him upstairs.

"Maybe we can do somethin' fur ye," he said.

Up-stairs, Leary wanted to hear how Williams (Austin) had escaped, and while the latter was relating this—manufacturing it as he went along—Leary listened, and regarded him meditatively.

Suddenly, it occurred to Leary that convicts are not allowed to wear long hair, much less beard, which would alter their appearance from that in the prison album, and, for a moment, there was a ferocious gleam in his eye.

The next instant, he recollects that this was an escaped prisoner, and the hair and whiskers probably a disguise.

His keen eye—he did not wear the famous green goggles then,) quickly confirmed this, and he asked:

"Where did ye get them?" indicating Austin's whiskers.

The question was rather startling, but Austin had also been watching; he saw it was not an altogether suspicious question, and promptly replied:

"From a friend in New York."

"Take 'em off an' let's have a look at yer mug!" was Leary's next and startling demand, but Quiet Jack had not obtained his sobriquet accidentally.

"I'd rather not. They're fixed right now, and I don't care to stir 'em," he replied, very coolly.

"Well! ye don't expect me to do any business, until I see yer mug—d'y'e?"

Leary was growing a little suspicious, and the longer he looked, the more he was inclined to think he had seen Williams before.

Just then, Leary heard Jack laughing at something Mac had said, and this fixed his course of action—for, although not suspecting it was Austin, he was determined to see Williams's face.

"Well," he said, carelessly, "suit yourself; but we can't do anythin' until ye show yer right mug! I'm goin' down for a few minutes. Did ye have anythin' t' eat?"

"Yes, I had a little bite before I came over."

"All right! I'll be back right away, an' I'll bring up somethin' t' drink."

Leary left the room, but Austin never thought of stirring until he returned.

The Secret Service man was satisfied that Leary did not suspect who he was, and, by putting off the "unmasking" until evening, he hoped to be able to so alter his face that the burly burglar would not recognize him when he removed the whiskers.

He had colors in his pocket, but there was neither glass nor water on the floor, as far as he could see.

Once down-stairs alone, or with Mac, Austin had no doubt of his ability to dupe Leary as to his identity.

In a few minutes Leary returned, accompanied by Jack, who carried a bottle and some glasses.

For a moment Austin looked suspiciously at the bottle, but quickly realized that he need not drink until the others did—which course he followed.

"Now, Williams," said Leary, as they sat down, "Jack agrees with me that we must have a squint at yer bare mug before we can do anythin'."

"Well, you know why I don't want to move 'em now; but, if you'll wait till to-night, I will give ye a chance to look all ye want."

Austin supposed this would settle the matter of the whiskers, and it did, but in an unexpected manner.

"Oh, what's th' use of waitin' so long!" said Kelly, with a grin, and then suddenly snatched the whiskers from Austin's face.

The surprise was so great that neither moved or spoke for nearly a minute, and that alone saved Austin from instant death.

"Hell and furies!" yelled Leary. "We have ye this time!"

He had whipped out a revolver, and Jack a heavy dirk knife.

But Austin was now standing with his back to the wall, with a cocked revolver in his hand.

"Stand back!" he cried, covering Leary, who jumped quickly to one side.

"Now, drop that pistol!" commanded Austin.

He scarcely noticed Jack—the knife, except at close quarters, he thought, was useless.

Leary, also, was too much engaged to pay any attention to his 'pal,' and he promptly obeyed Austin's order.

Just as Leary threw down his revolver, Jack's right hand went back over his shoulder; something sung like an arrow through the air, and the heavy dirk sunk in Austin's arm, knocking the revolver out of his hand.

As the revolver fell, Jack jumped at Austin, and in a moment both were rolling about the floor, fighting like demons.

Leary stood over them, dealing Austin a kick whenever opportunity offered, which was seldom, owing to their quick movements.

For the same reason he dared not risk shooting.

In falling, Austin had instinctively pulled the knife out of his arm, and it was for this they fought.

He was getting a little the better of the ruffian, when suddenly Leary, seeing an opening, dealt him a tremendous kick on the already injured arm, and Austin dropped the knife.

"Now, Jack! Give it to him!" cried Leary.

But Jack was not to be permitted to fulfill his leader's order, for, as he grasped the dirk, the door was thrown open, and Jim and Mac rushed into the room in the order named.

One glance was sufficient for Mac.

He was not a big man, and Jim was not heavy, but the force with which Mac hurled him across the men on the floor was amazing.

Jim had scarcely left his grasp before he had caught up one of the heavy chairs, and hurled it at Leary.

His actions were so lightning-like and unexpected, that Leary was taken unawares, and the heavy chair sent him flying into the corner of the room.

Without waiting to see the effect of the first,

Mac grasped another chair, and the two ruffians just then scrambling to their feet on either side of Austin, received the full benefit of this.

Both were sent to the floor again—Jack receiving a tremendous crack on the temple from one of the legs.

Mac fairly reveled in the fight.

"Hurroo!" he cried, and, as Austin jumped up, away went the last chair at Leary, who had managed to get on his knees, and was reaching for his revolver.

"Quick, now! Out of the window!" shouted Mac. "There's more comin' up!"

Sure enough! Austin could hear footsteps hastily ascending the stairs, and as he went through one window, and Mac the other, several men rushed in.

It was only one story to the ground, and they were down and away before the new-comers realized what had happened.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAC LOSES HIS JOB—THE LETTER.

As soon as they reached the roadway, Mac halted.

"Let me tie up yer arm!" he urged.

There was, of course, no danger of pursuit in the open daylight, and Austin gave him his handkerchief to put around the wound, which was bleeding freely.

"Well, we made a bad hand of it!" said Mac, after having bandaged the wound quite skillfully. "You've got a bad arm an' I've lost my job!"

The doleful tone in which this was said, caused Austin to smile.

"Yes," he answered; "I'm afraid you'll have to look for another job."

"And now, I suppose, ye'll be wantin' yer revinge at wance?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, av coarse, they'll get everythin' out o' the way as soon as th' kin, but, if we hurry back from th' station-house, we'll ketch somethin', fur th' cellar's full. We won't get th' min so aisy though—they're off be this."

Mac expected Austin would insist on closing the Red Light for good and all, and was much pleased to hear the latter say:

"Oh, let it go until we can get at the house! This will keep him, and the rest, pretty shady for awhile, and some night, when we're sure he's not at home, we'll make the search you are so anxious for."

"Some night!" repeated Mac in surprise. "How will we get in now? She'll know all about this before night."

"Get in! Why, we'll get in as he would into your house—with skeleton keys—a jimmy, or whatever's necessary!"

Mac stopped and looked at Austin in admiring surprise, for a few seconds. Then he said:

"Ye'll have t' excuse me, but I beg yer pardon for it!"

"What the deuce is the matter with you?" asked Austin, laughingly.

"I tuk ye fur an omadhaun like the rest o' them," replied Mac humbly.

"Ye'r so quiet like!" he added, after a moment.

"That's what they call me at home—Quiet Jack," said Austin, after he ceased laughing.

"Faith, it's a good name! But 'still wathers run deep.' I should have known betther!"

This comment caused another outburst from "Quiet Jack," and he did not recover his usual gravity, until they boarded a car going downtown.

At his hotel, Austin received a message that Morris was much better, and wished him to call next day.

This he showed to Mac, saying: "I will not need to go to-night after all. If you wish, I'll go with you to New York."

Mac "wished," and both started at once.

At the detective agency, Mac reported the loss of his "job."

This was on account of his original engagement by Hammond, in the Martinez case.

Then on account of his recent engagement by Mr. Bowe, he said:

"I haven't found out yit where Misther Hammond was that night, but ye can jist tell Misther Bowe that I've found that there's a man that does know, an' if it comes t' th' worst, I kin bring it out."

"It's no use thryin' that yit, an' mebbe we kin git along without it altogether."

"I've found out where he was, up t' half-past ten. Th' other man knows the rest."

Mr. Wilson was pleased, said so, and then informed Mac that the company in which Mr. Martens's life was insured, had that day received a communication asking for an extension of time to file proof of death.

The letter, written apparently on behalf of Mrs. Martens, bore the office-heading of a lawyer of not altogether stainless reputation.

As the company had already granted this request to Mr. Wilson, they sent the letter to him for his information, and he now handed it to Mac, with instructions to find out what Mrs. Martens knew about it.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRANGE SCENE.

AUSTIN accompanied Mac to the Martens residence, where inquiry revealed that neither Mrs. Martens nor Julie knew anything about the letter, or the attorney.

Julie appeared to be very nervous, and quite agitated while Mac was talking.

To Austin, who was watching her closely, she looked like a person trying to say something, but either could not remember, or muster courage enough to do it.

When about leaving, and while all four were standing in the hall—Mac warning the ladies not to mention the fact of his inquiry about the letter to anybody—Julie suddenly shivered and exclaimed:

"Mr. Rodriguez!"

The next instant the bell rung; and Mrs. Martens going to the door, admitted Rodriguez!

Mac and Austin exchanged looks of surprise. Mrs. Martens, too, looked a little startled.

Julie accompanied Rodriguez into the parlor, and the two detectives left, after again cautioning Mrs. Martens against speaking of the insurance letter.

"I'd like t' know more about that lad," said Mac, as they walked toward the corner.

"He certainly possesses some queer influence over her," returned Austin, adding:

"That was a queer trick about the bell!"

"Yes," assented Mac, rather absently. "Very queer."

He was evidently thinking deeply, and Austin did not disturb him.

When they reached the corner, like one who had come to a sudden resolution, Mac said:

"Austin, I'm going back to watch that fellow, and, if I can get in, to hear what he is talking about."

For once Mac had forgotten his brogue, and the other smiled.

Bidding Austin "good-night," and promising to meet him at the hospital next morning, Mac started back to the house.

Ringing the basement bell, Mac explained to the girl who came to the door, that he was a detective, and that Mrs. Martens wished him to hear the conversation going on in the parlor.

The girl hesitated, but when Mac showed her his badge, she admitted him and he crept upstairs.

The door of the back parlor was closed, and, from the sounds issuing from it, Mac judged it was there the company would be found.

After listening for a moment, he passed quietly and cautiously to the front parlor.

The room was dark, the door open, and he stepped in.

The folding-doors were only partly closed, and a faint light penetrated the room he was in.

Suddenly, Mac was startled to find that there was another person in the room!

Looking about he saw a figure in a chair near the window, but the light was so faint he could not make out who it was.

Listening intently, and expecting an outcry every moment, Mac stood still, and then suddenly realized that whoever it was, the person was asleep.

He could hear the deep regular breathing of a person in sound sleep, and stealing softly to the window, saw it was Mrs. Martens!

Reassured on this point, he hastened to the folding-doors, and peeped into the rear room.

Facing him was Julie, sitting in a low chair near the opposite wall.

Her eyes were closed, and the watcher would have thought her asleep, but at that moment she began talking.

"They were detectives!" she was saying.

"What did they want? What were they talking about?" demanded Rodriguez, in a commanding tone.

He was standing a little to one side of Julie, and Mac could thus see both the actors in this strange scene.

Julie did not reply immediately, and Rodriguez repeated the command in a peremptory tone.

Julie's face looked troubled.

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" she protested.

"You must! Tell me at once!" he urged, threateningly, and Mac was about to rush in when the answer came:

"They came about a letter—an insurance letter!"

"Who were they?"

"I don't know—I don't know!" was the weary reply, and then Rodriguez released her from the hypnotic spell.

In a few minutes Julie opened her eyes, and looked about in surprise.

Rodriguez, seated at the piano, was playing low, sweet music.

"Where is auntie?" exclaimed Julie, starting up.

"Ah! awake, are you?" said Rodriguez, smiling. "This is a sleepy house to-night, and I'm afraid 'auntie' has gone to sleep in front. Let us see!"

As he arose from the stool, Mac tip-toed into the hall and down-stairs, where he found the servant girl watching for him.

"Well?" she said inquiringly.

Mac hesitated for a moment as to what he should say—not that it was necessary to say anything, but he had always found it good policy to have the servants on his side.

"Well," he replied, slowly, "ye did a good thing in lettin' me up without botherin' Mrs. Martens, but I can't make anythin' of yit. I'll have t' come another night—to morrow, mebbe."

Mac did not care what she told Mrs. Martens, and hearing voices in the hall above, rightly conjectured that Rodriguez was leaving.

"I must be off!" he exclaimed, and hurried out, and across the street to wait for his man.

While waiting, he removed the gray whiskers from under his chin, and then sacrificed another old stiff hat, which was replaced by a soft one—usually termed a slouch hat, which he pulled well over his eyes.

In a few minutes Rodriguez came out and, walking rapidly across to Third avenue, jumped on a passing car going down-town.

Mac accompanied him, of course, but remained on the rear platform.

As they neared Chatham Square, Rodriguez jumped off the car and entered a house, where the largest and squarest game of faro on the Bowery was played.

He was allowed to enter without any objection, but the iron door was closed firmly and politely in Mac's face.

Remonstrance was useless, and Mac entered the concert saloon on the ground floor.

The place was in full blast—music, dancing, drinking, singing, swearing, smoking, loud talking, and occasionally a little fighting, was going on, and taking a seat near the door, Mac called for a cigar.

Presently a young lady, in a very abbreviated costume, sat down beside him, and asked if he was going to treat.

Mac replied in the affirmative, to get rid her, but in this was disappointed.

"What's the matter with ye?" she asked, and then without waiting for a reply, continued:

"Ye look blue! Have ye been playin'?"

"No. I wanted to, but the coon wouldn't let me up. I'd give a dollar t' get a crack at the game to-night!"

He was grasping at the metaphorical straw, in saying this, and was surprised when the woman said:

"Hand over the dollar!"

Mac thought it was simply a game to get the money, but passed over the dollar.

"Come over to the bar!" she said, leading the way.

"Now stand us another drink!" was her next demand.

Mac did not hesitate; he saw she meant business.

When the drinks were placed on the counter, the woman said to the bartender:

"Pete! This is a friend o' mine;—pass him up-stairs for me!"

"Want t' play?" asked "Pete," looking at him sharply.

"Yes, if I get a show."

"All right! Here, Jack! (to a lounging). Tell that coon t' let this gent up-stairs."

And up-stairs Mac went, but a thorough search at the different tables failed to find Rodriguez.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN UNCEEREMONIOUS ENTRANCE.

WHERE could he have gone?

Mac had not lost five minutes down-stairs, and he could scarcely believe a man, who came so far to gamble, would have left so soon.

Still, this appeared to be the only solution of his disappearance—for he was evidently not among either spectators, or players.

As he was about to go out, Mac noticed an-

other grated door, barring the way to the floor above.

Now he knew where Rodriguez had gone; but, could he get up?

As he reached the door, apparently about to go out, Mac pulled out a roll of bills, and selecting a dollar handed it to the darky, saying:

"I want you to remember me next time I come! I lost a friend through your delay tonight."

"How's dat, sah? I'm sorry, but I didn't know ye!"

"Why, I saw a friend come in, not two minutes before me, and when I did get in he wasn't here."

Mac then described Rodriguez closely, and when he finished the darky said, with a grin:

"Why he ain't gone, sah! He's up-stairs!"

"Up-stairs! Then I guess I'll go up, too."

"No, sah! No, sah! I kean't let ye up 'less the boss says so!" protested the darky earnestly adding.

"It's a private party, sah!"

"Can you tell me who's in it?—maybe I know them!" said Mac, adding as he handed the doorkeeper another bill:

"Of course, if they're strangers, I don't care to intrude."

The second dollar was too much for the negro; there could be no harm in telling this liberal gentleman who was up-stairs—especially as he had a friend up there.

"Well, sah," he said, "dar's yoah friend 'n' de boss, 'n' a gemmen called Jack—doan't know his las' name—'n' Mistah Leary, 'n' a young gemman—but I can't tell his name. Get fired shuah, 'f I did."

"Why, it's the very party I'm to meet!" exclaimed Mac.

The well-assumed air and tone of pleased surprise, overcame the doorkeeper's scruples, and he said:

"I s'pose it's all right, sah. De boss said not 'sturb him, but I'll go up 'n' tell him soon's I git a chance."

The man who hesitates, 'tis said, is lost.

The doorkeeper was hesitating when Mac produced another dollar saying:

"Never mind about going up—I'll be responsible for that. Besides, I want to surprise them."

And then the doorkeeper was lost—or rather, he open the grated door and allowed Mac to go up-stairs, but it was the latter, not the darky, who was in danger.

As Mac passed up-stairs, the door behind him shut with a loud click, that made him stop undecided whether to go up or return.

Again, the man who hesitates, etc., and once more it was Mac, for instead of obeying the impulse to return, he drew his revolver, and cautiously crept up-stairs.

Moving cautiously, but quickly, the detective reached the door at the head of the stairs, and listened.

Five minutes' listening resulted in nothing, except to convince Mac that a game of some kind was in operation. The clinking of the chips and the muttered exclamations of the players told him that much; but that was not what he was there for.

Over the door was a fanlight, and beside Mac was a step-ladder, which had probably been used that day to clean the aforeside fanlight, and had been forgotten.

So reasoned the detective, and rightly, too, as he fixed the ladder firmly against the wall, preparatory to ascending it.

"I'll have a squint at them, anyhow, and then I'll go below and wait," he thought, as he stepped lightly on the ladder.

Up, up, oh, so gently, he climbed.

A misstep, or a heavy one, and then it might—probably would be a fight for life, but at length the fanlight was reached in safety, and Mac peeped in.

Around a table in the center of the room, were the five men mentioned by the doorkeeper.

They were playing faro, and one of them—"de boss"—was dealing, while three played against the bank—Rodriguez, who was not playing, acting as "lookout."

The "young gemman" whose name the doorkeeper was so careful not to mention, appeared to be winning heavily, although his thoughts were quite evidently not on the game, for twice Mac saw a winning bet taken up—once by the dealer, and once by Leary.

"It'll be Jack's turn next," muttered the watcher, wondering where he had seen the handsome, well-dressed, and gentlemanly-looking young man, whose luck appeared to defy his own inattention, and the tricks of his companions.

Mac had a good memory, and was not long in "placing" his man.

"It's young Gordon—Barker & Gordon's cashier," he muttered, after a minute's thought, "and he's on the shortest cut to Sing Sing. What would his uncle?"

Just then, Gordon cut short Mac's reflections regarding him, by pushing back from the table impatiently, and speaking to his companions.

The watcher spent no time in useless regrets over the ignorance displayed in keeping the fanlight shut—and incidentally preventing him from hearing what was going on—he simply cursed it, and crept down to the door.

Here, by placing his ear to the woodwork, Mac could hear every word that was uttered.

He did not hear the first words, which were:

"Hold on! Don't make that turn until I've had a word with these gentlemen. I can't play until I do."

The dealer paused in the act of drawing a card, while the others stared hard at Gordon, who, as Mac reached the door, continued:

"You, gentlemen, have been constantly assuring me that you would arrange to have Harry Hammond released from prison, and freed from the charge of murder, but, as yet, I cannot see that anything has been done, nor does it seem likely there will be, till I go to the front myself."

"Phew!" softly whistled Mac, "can he be a murderer, as well as gambler?"

"Now," continued Gordon, "if you will tell that you can't do anything, or won't do anything, I'll know what to do."

"One thing I will not do, and that is, let him suffer any longer. He will be on trial for his life next week, and something must be done—"

When Gordon began the last few words, the doorkeeper happened to look up the dimly-lighted stairway and saw Mac apparently standing at the door.

Recollecting what the latter had said about wishing to surprise his friends, the doorkeeper chuckled and said:

"You'll look a good while 'fore you find de way t' git dat door open! Guess I'll help him; he wuz pretty good t' me."

And the well-meaning darky pulled a handle, releasing the spring of the door above, which flew back under the pressure of the man leaning against it, and Mac pitched head-first into the room!

Then the door snapped shut, and the doorkeeper remarked:

"Golly! He musta been leanin' ag'in' it. Hope he won't be mad."

CHAPTER XIX.

CAGED—CURIOUS CONVERSATION.

As may be supposed, Mac's sudden entrance created no little alarm. Indeed, the first, and natural, supposition was that the police were making a raid, and those in the room were panic-stricken, but as the door closed, and nobody followed the man lying on the floor, they recovered from their fright.

When he struck the floor, Mac uttered a cry of pain. His right wrist was broken or sprained—useless at all events, and, as he could not use his pistol, he lay perfectly still, feigning unconsciousness to learn from the conversation that was sure to follow, who and what he would be taken for, that is: if he escaped recognition by Red Leary.

The latter was first to recover himself, and springing toward Mac, pistol in hand, turned him over with his foot.

"Who is he?"

"Do you know him?"

"He must have hurt himself!"

These, and similar questions and exclamations greeted Leary's action.

"I don't know—seems t' me I know that mug," replied the burly ruffian.

He had seen Mac without whiskers, but the latter had looked like a fresh-faced young Irishman, while the man on the floor was pale—deathly pale from the excruciating pain he was in—and was about forty years of age.

Still, there was a great resemblance, and Leary continued:

"Yes, I think I know this duck, but I can tell better when he opens his eyes, and talks. If it's the one I think, he goes out o' here feet first."

"Surely, you wouldn't murder him?" said Gordon, and the horror expressed in his tones caused Mac to think:

"He's not so bad, after all!"

And Leary to say, savagely:

"Call it what ye like, but dead men tell no tales! If this is the duck I think he is, he's been listenin' and heard too much t' be let loose, and you're just as much in the mud as we're in the mire."

"But, how did he get by the nigger?" asked Jack.

"I'll soon find out!" exclaimed the keeper of the den, pressing a button that summoned the doorkeeper.

In a few seconds, the darky appeared, and, on being questioned, explained how Mac came to be admitted to the private room.

All were surprised to learn that Mac claimed them as friends, and Gordon said:

"Maybe he does know some of us."

"How did he come to fall?" asked the "boss."

"Was he drunk?"

Perceiving that he was not suspected of pulling the catch, and that there was something very wrong about the man on the carpet, Sam replied:

"Well, not exactly, sah."

"Which means that he was about able to walk!" laughed Rodriguez.

"He's in a drunken stupor," said Gordon.

"Hold on a minit! How long is it since you let him up?" asked Leary.

"Bout ten minutes, sah."

"That'll do—get out!"

"But there's a gemman t' see you 'n' Mr. Rod—Rod—I kean't say the name. He's a dark gemman—just come in."

"Montczl!" exclaimed Leary, looking significantly at Rodriguez, and to Sam:

"All right! Send him up!"

"Here, Jack!" he continued, as the negro left the room. "Bear a hand; we'd better sling this fellow into the other room."

Mac hung limp and motionless while being conveyed to the next room, where he was thrown upon the floor, the injured wrist coming under him, and causing most exquisite agony.

Fortunately there was no light, the ruffians did not see the agony expressed in the detective's face, and, with the remark that he would be there when wanted, they left him—locking the heavy folding doors after them.

The moment he was alone, Mac rolled over and released his injured wrist; then he lay quiet for a few minutes—fearing Leary would return—and then, hearing the door in the next room opening and shutting several times, arose and went to the keyhole in the folding doors.

Leary had removed the key, thus leaving Mac an unobstructed view of that part of the inner room in front of the keyhole, and he saw the former, with Rodriguez and a stranger, seated at the card-table.

"Another Spaniard," was the detective's mental comment as his eyes fell upon the third man—a swarthy, black-bearded, evil-looking fellow of thirty-five to forty.

The precious trio were engaged in earnest conversation, but not a word could Mac catch until they were about to leave, when Rodriguez, as he arose from the table, said:

"Then it's settled that you will prevent this fellow from talking—at least until we are out of the country?"

"Yes, I'll tend t' him," replied Leary.

"It must be done, you know, and done at once—no matter how, or at what risk or cost," said the stranger.

"Can't ye leave it t' me?" growled Leary, adding:

"If he makes any fuss, I'll fix him—don't you fret 'bout that!"

With the last words, the gas was turned out, and the party left the room.

Mac was now monarch of all he could survey, which was not much until he lighted a small pocket bull's-eye lantern, and then he sat down to consider the situation.

That his position was a truly desperate one, he well knew. When daylight came, and Leary returned, there could be no further feigning; he must meet the gaze and return the questions of the burly ruffian, who he knew—even on mere suspicion—would not have the slightest hesitation about cutting his throat—or rather having it cut, for Leary generally managed to confine his part of particularly dangerous work to the planning and directing of it.

Without a weapon—his revolver was missing—had probably fallen out of his pocket when he struck the floor—and with his right hand disabled, so that he could not use the bits of coloring always in his pocket to alter his face, Mac felt that his chances were very, very slim.

"If I could only change my eyes," he muttered, "the rest wouldn't matter so much, but he'll know me the instant I look at him."

Mac had peculiarly bright, piercing eyes—eyes that were always concealed behind glasses when the character he assumed would permit.

Red Leary had seen those eyes; had remarked their brilliancy, and there was not the slightest hope that he would fail to recognize them.

And, to Mac, that recognition meant death.

"Well, if the wound would only heal before he had a chance to look at it, I'd soon be one-eyed. I must find out when he's coming back. If he isn't back in the morning, that nigger will probably bring me some breakfast, and it will be queer if I can't pump something out of him."

"And now to take another look at the place; perhaps I've missed something."

With the last words—for he was unconsciously giving utterance to his thoughts—Mac arose and again went over the apartment in which he was confined—which was the center one of three rooms, without a window and as dark as a pocket, except when the heavy folding-doors on each side were open.

"No. I missed—"

As Mac was speaking the murmur of voices caused him to stop, and think he was wrong—that he had missed something, and following the direction of the sound, he found that a dumb-waiter, built into the wall, had escaped him on his first tour of inspection.

Sticking his head into the opening, the prisoner listened, and this was what he heard—Red Leary being the speaker:

"So you go up, Jack—he won't be so suspicious of you."

"If it's him, you'll know them eyes in a minit, 'n' then we can fix him before he thinks we are on to him. Keep yer gun ready. I'll stand at the foot of the stairs."

CHAPTER XX.

DRUGGED—OR POISONED?

WITHIN a minute after hearing Leary's orders to his confederate, Mac heard some one unlocking the folding-doors; then they were thrown back.

"Takin' a pretty good snooze," remarked Jack, as, standing between the doors, lantern in one hand and revolver in the other, he surveyed the sleeping man on the floor.

"Come, get up!" he continued, advancing and giving the sleeper a kick.

Mac groaned, rubbed his eyes, and moaned as he held up his injured hand.

"Get up!" repeated Jack.

Very stiff and sore, apparently, and very careful of that injured member, Mac obeyed.

"What's the matter with yer hand?" asked Jack.

"Reckon I must have been fallin' on it, mister. Feels ez if it wuz broke. Say, be you the jailer?"

Jack grinned, and reaching up lighted a gas jet which Mac had not seen.

"Does this look like a jail?" he asked, as though the gas had been lighted to show Mac that it was not.

The latter, however, knew that the light was for the purpose of seeing his eyes, and turning, he looked deliberately at Jack, drawling:

"Well, I swan t' goodness! If this here's jail, it hain't like our'n."

Jack started when Mac looked at him, and, when he turned to leave the room, his face wore a puzzled expression.

"I say, mister, what's yeour breakfus' time?" asked Mac.

"Aw—give us a rest!" was the surly reply.

Jack was evidently annoyed, mixed up, about something, and when he re-entered the room below, Mac, at the dumb-waiter, heard him say so.

"Well?" asked Leary.

"I don't know. I'm all mixed up!" replied his pal, adding:

"The chap that wuz at Red Light looked younger, though he could fix that easy enough, but this duck is cross-eyed!"

"Sure?"

"Sure. He wuz asleep when I kicked him up—talks like a greeny, 'n' has a broken wrist. And, besides, he's gray-headed."

"But he looks like the other duck?"

"Yes—but—" began Jack, his confederate, hesitatingly, then stopped short, and for a few minutes, silence reigned below.

"By Jupiter, I'm in luck! Who would think they could be fooled so easy? Guess they're thinking they have a white elephant on their hands!"

While Mac was thus joyously communing with himself, the scene below was quite different to what he had supposed, and what it actually was, when Jack stopped speaking.

The sudden stop was caused by Leary pointing significantly to the dumb-waiter, which had just caught his eye, and both moved noiselessly across the thickly carpeted floor to the further end of the room.

A short, but very earnest conversation followed—Leary apparently trying to persuade his companion to do something from which the lat-

ter shrunk, and argued in turn in favor of something else, ending with:

"Better let it go my way, Cap; there's been too much of the other lately."

"All right," agreed Leary, sullenly, "but look out you're not sorry for it."

Returning as noiselessly as they had gone, Leary renewed the conversation in a loud voice, saying:

"Well, Jack, keep an eye on him for a couple days 'n' if he turns out O. K., we'll turn him out."

Mac heard a laugh follow this, and he joined in it willingly, though noiselessly.

"He's lookin' for breakfast. Will I send him somethin'?" next struck the listener's ear.

"Yes, send Sam up; now we'd better git," replied Leary.

"A narrow squeak!" muttered Mac, as he heard the others leaving the room below.

Shortly after, and while Mac was still congratulating himself on the success of his ruse, the door was unlocked and Sam entered with his tray.

On the tray—which contained a very good breakfast—there was one thing for which Mac felt really grateful; a pot of coffee, and while helping himself to this, he asked:

"Where are the gentlemen who were here last night—or were there any gentlemen here last night?"

"Dey's all gone, sah," replied Sam, who was staring in open-mouthed astonishment at the man who had become cross-eyed during the night.

"What a chance! If my wrist was only right—or even if I had my pistol, I'd be out in five minutes!"

So thought Mac as he helped himself to a second cup of coffee, and resolving to make the attempt, asked:

"Who keeps house, when all the rest are gone?"

"Me, sah. Nobody in de house 'cept me 'n' de bartender."

"Do you—would you like—to make—" began Mac, and then stopped short.

What did this queer, drowsy feeling that was creeping over him, mean? Already his head was sinking on his breast and he was fast losing control of his faculties.

The coffee! Ah, yes—that was it! The coffee was drugged, poisoned! And with this last effort of his fast fading faculties, Mac fell forward to the floor.

CHAPTER XXI.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES—THE DRUNK."

TEN days have elapsed since Quiet John Austin parted with his friend, Mac, at the residence of Mrs. Martens. Since that time nothing has been seen or heard of him. Had the earth opened and swallowed him, Mac could not have disappeared more completely and mysteriously.

Many people were worried over this. Even Manager Wilson had become uneasy, and quietly set several men to hunt up the missing man. As for Austin, he felt certain that Mac had fallen a victim to some snare of the Leary gang, and haunted the vicinity of the Red Light.

Since that time Mr. Hugh Gordon, cashier of the banking-house of Barker & Gordon, had, also, disappeared—and as completely and mysteriously; for on an examination of the books, ordered by his stern old uncle, the young man's accounts were found correct.

Many people were worried over this—but, particularly Agnes Hammond, who had just returned from Europe, and whose grief appeared to be equally divided between the sad predicament of her brother, and the disappearance of the man to whom she was secretly engaged.

Since that time, the case of *The People vs. Hammond*, had come up for trial, but by a vigorous effort of the prisoner's counsel, had been set down for the next term.

"But," assured Mr. Bowe, "it cannot go on in this way, Mr. Hammond. You must give me your entire confidence, or I must give up the case."

"I will consider what you say, sir, and let you know my decision to-morrow," replied Harry.

Next day Mr. Bowe was sent for and held a long consultation with his client, who promised a statement which he made, with:

"This is in the strictest confidence, Mr. Bowe, and must be used only with my consent."

"But, why was I not informed of this before?" indignantly demanded Mr. Bowe, when his client had unbosomed himself. "This man may be dead, now, for aught we know to the contrary!"

"It seems to me, what I have told you contains plenty of reason for secrecy," quietly replied Harry.

"For me, perhaps—yes. For twelve men, good, bad and very bad—no! However, better late than never. I'll see what can be done, and let you know the moment I learn anything of importance."

Apparently Mr. Bowe did not learn anything of importance, for the day before that set for the trial he called on his client to say:

"Mr. Hammond, I've had the best detective talent in the country working on this case, but can learn nothing."

"That house is closed, and of its former employees, those that we can find, profess to know nothing of you, although your friend, (confound him!) appears to have been recognized by one man."

"You must, therefore, allow me to make use of what you have recently told me."

"Not yet—not until the last moment," was the firm reply, and Mr. Bowe left his client, thoroughly disgusted and strongly tempted to throw up the case.

His last argument before leaving was:

"Don't imagine the State has been idle, depending on your possession of the gloves and pin. Detectives have been tracing your career just prior to the murder, and it is known that it suddenly became a dissipated one. Why? They say, because you were forbidden to visit Miss Martens and quarreled with her father. The assertion to the contrary will count for little—since she loves you."

"And as your record will be brought out, why spare his?"

"Because mine is my own."

And then Mr. Bowe left his obstinate client.

It rained heavily during the afternoon of Mr. Bowe's last consultation with his obstinate client, and the celebrated lawyer got a little wet before reaching his office in New York, but had he been compelled to visit Blissville, as we now must, "wet" would not begin to express the condition he soon would have found himself in.

Blissville, that day, was a sea of mud, and, about eight o'clock that night a man entered the Red Light, bearing every appearance of having enjoyed a swim through it: also, of having spent an injudicious length of time in refreshing the inner man—in liquid form.

He was covered with mud, and appeared to be full of bad whisky.

"Gi' ush a drink!" he said, staggering up to the bar.

"Produce the dust!"

Business was bad, and Smith felt ugly.

"Got plen'y dush—shee!" said the "drunk," producing a handful of change, adding:

"Foun' er pocketbook t'day."

"More likely lifted it!" muttered Smith.

"Wha' shay?" demanded the other.

"Nothin'! What'll ye have?"

"Whisky."

Having disposed of a moderate drink, the inebriated, mud-covered individual asked if he could sit down for a little while beside the stove.

"Ye shee," he explained with drunken gravity, "been in er rain all day 'n' wan'er get dry. Give er dollar get dry."

"All right!" assented Smith; "go into the back room."

"Mush er 'bliged. Treat ye by'n' by," returned the other, as he staggered into the rear room.

Smith had seen some bills among the currency and, knowing the heat would set the drunken man asleep, resolved to have part, if not all, of them.

The rain having ceased, however, customers—men whom Smith knew, and would trust just as long as his eye was on them—began to straggle in, and he was compelled to remain at the bar until the man who succeeded Mac as bartender, entered.

Although off duty for the night, the latter willingly acceded to his employer's request to "relieve him a few minutes," and Smith went into the back room.

Instead of a mud-covered man lying in a drunken stupor, Smith found the room empty!

As he gazed around in angry surprise, the "boss" of the Red Light saw that the back door was open, and went out, hoping to find the missing man somewhere around the premises.

In a few minutes he returned cursing the luck that had *robbed* him of his victim, and after another glance around the miserably furnished back room, returned to the bar muttering:

"Well, that sucker's gone, anyhow!"

Smith was wrong, however, for the individual referred to, looking quite sober, was on the next floor, with his eye applied to the keyhole of the door of the back room, paying strict attention to a conversation between Red Leary and a man sitting bound to a chair placed over a trap-door.

At the very time Smith returned to the bar the burly burglar was saying:

"You've got just one minute, 'n' then that trap'll spring! Now's yer chance t' talk—you'll never have another!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TABLES TURNED.

WHEN Mac recovered from the effects of the drugged coffee, he found himself in a room which he quickly recognized as the "trap-door room" of the Red Light.

Fortunately the sunlight streaming through the curtainless window of that crime-stained apartment struck him full in the eyes, causing him to blink like an owl suddenly brought into the light.

Had it been otherwise, Mack would have been a subject for a barrel of quicklime in a very few minutes, for his confederate, Jack, was stationed at the foot of the bed to watch for the moment when he should open his eyes.

To make sure of this, Jack placed the unconscious man so that the light would strike his face, and now, in his eagerness, made a slight noise, as he leaned forward to look.

Slight as the noise was, it seemed to put Mac on his guard, and when he opened his eyes again, Jack saw they were the same as when he saw them before.

He so reported to Red Leary, but the latter was still suspicious.

Who was this fellow, and what was he after?

Being unable to answer this double-barreled question himself, the prisoner was desired to do so, but aside from saying that he came from down East, and that his name was Chase, the latter either could not or would not tell anything further.

"But what were you doin' at that door—the door of that gambling-room? And how did ye git there?" Leary demanded, peremptorily.

He could have answered the last question himself, but wished to see if Mac would lie about it. The latter, however, knew nothing at all about the matter—"must have been too drunk to know what he was doing."

For nine days, in one form or another, this questioning (accompanied by the frequent sudden entrance of Leary, Jack, Smith and Jim), was kept up; but, fully alive to his danger, Mac was never caught unprepared to answer, and was always cross-eyed.

"Be heavens, it's cross-eyed in airnest I'll be, if this keeps an much longer," he muttered, on the tenth day.

But, that day was destined to end his suspense.

Toward evening Sam, the doorkeeper of the gambling-house, arrived at the Red Light, with a small package for Leary. The latter was absent at the time, and the negro, wet and muddy as he was, sat down and waited for him. The package was too precious to be intrusted to any one else for delivery.

About seven o'clock Jack entered and inquired if there was any message for Leary.

"Yes, there's a coon here got a package for him, and won't give it up to any one but him," replied Smith.

Jack looked surprised on seeing Sam, but finding he could not obtain the package, hurried off for Leary, with whom he returned in a few minutes, and the trio retired to the rear room.

There was a gleam of ferocious satisfaction in the eyes of the leader, as he saw the contents of the package—a revolver and a small metal badge.

"See! I was right! Now we've got him!" he cried, turning to Jack, and then to Sam:

"Where did you get 'em? How?"

"Well, ye see, sah, we're a-goin' t' open up ag'in Mohnday, 'n' I wuz kinder cleanin' up dis mawnin', 'n' a-found dem yere ar'icles ohn de floor o' de private room."

"Good for you! Here's somethin' for yer trouble. Come, Jack; I guess we kin make him talk now!" and handing Sam some money, Leary led the way to the room above, where, planting himself directly in front of Mac, he said:

"Now, Mister Man, I want t' know what yer little game is. There's no use keepin' up the country bluff—that's played out. See?"

By a tremendous effort Mac controlled himself, and made no sign of recognition, when his badge and pistol were suddenly placed before him.

"Ye see, we've got ye dead t' rights!" continued Leary, watching him closely.

"I don't understand ye, mister, but I hope it's somethin' that'll get me out o' this confounded chair," calmly returned Mac.

"Ye'll understand bloody quick, if ye don't drop yer bliffin'! Now, what're ye after? I don't care a rap who ye are. I know what ye are, and you'll never leave this house alive until I know what ye'r' after!"

Again Mac noted that Leary's anxiety was all centered on what he (Mac) "was after," and he was puzzled by it.

If Gordon was the murderer, as his language at the gambling-table would seem to indicate, why was Leary so anxious about it?

"Well, what have ye got t' say?" impatiently demanded Leary.

"Say!" echoed Mac. "I hain't got nuthin' t' say, I guess. You're boss of the job."

"Pull that chair over the 'death-trap, Jack!" savagely exclaimed Leary. "You'll say somethin' bloody quick, or you'll never say anythin'!"

The chair was dragged over the trap, and the unscrupulous ruffian continued.

"Now, you've got just five minutes t' make up yer mind!

"Jack, you take that fellow, Jim, 'n' when you hear the bell, pull her for all she's worth!"

Jack left the room, and, watch in hand, Leary sat before the victim.

Soon came the words:

"You've got just one minute, 'n' then that trap'll spring! Now's yer chance t' talk; you'll never have another!"

Mac made no reply—no sign of having heard him.

Rapidly the seconds ticked off, and when the minute was up, Leary arose and walked toward a bell-handle projecting from the wall.

"Blast ye!" he savagely exclaimed, "if I had time, I'd make ye talk; but you'll be in kingdom come in two minutes, anyhow!"

Red Leary's hand was almost on the bell-knob, whose signal was to consign the detective to a horrible death, when both were startled by:

"Well—I—guess—not!"

Turning quickly, they saw the rain-soaked, mud-covered, but no longer drunken individual, introduced in the previous chapter, covering Leary with a pistol.

"Come away from that bell—quick!"

The order came so short, sharp and imperative—so different from the first slow, drawling words, that Leary jumped back from the now doubly dangerous bell-handle, as if a shot had been fired.

Still keeping Leary covered, the man of mud walked to the side of the prisoner, and, with a clasp-knife, which he carried in his left hand on entering, cut the cords binding Mac's arms.

"There—I guess you can do the rest," he said, dropping the knife on Mac's knees.

"As soon as you are loose, put those bracelets on this fellow," continued the new-comer, drawing a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and Mac then recognized him.

"Be the holy poker, it's Quiet Jack!" he exclaimed, mentally, and quickly severing the cords, picked up his own pistol and badge, as well as the handcuffs.

"What's this for?" demanded Leary, after Mac had snapped the bracelets on his wrists.

"Anything you like, but I guess we had better call it the murder of Martinez."

"Oh, that's it, eh?" returned the prisoner, breathing a sigh of relief. "Well, you're barkin' up the wrong tree this time."

"Possibly, but I've got enough to keep you under lock and key for the balance of your life," quietly replied Austin, adding:

"Mac, here's another pair of cuffs—there's somebody coming up. I'll cover him—you cuff him."

The words were hardly spoken when Jack, tired of waiting for the bell, entered and was made prisoner, greatly to his astonishment and chagrin.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RED LEARY "SQUEALS."

"Now, we might as well start," said Austin, when Kelly, that is to say, Jack, was secured.

"Hold on a minit! Will ye promise t' let up on—on the other things, if I tell you who done the Spaniard?"

It was Red Leary who spoke. He had already resolved to secure, if possible, immunity for himself by selling his friends.

Honor among thieves!

"It'll be too late, ef ye don't hurry up!" he added, looking from one to the other.

The detectives exchanged glances, and Aus-

tin, who knew Mac's heart was set on catching the murderer of Martinez, said:

"As far as the whisky is concerned, I'll give you a week to stop it, if you have any information worth hearing. Go ahead now—we've no time to waste."

"Well, you'll find the men that done Martinez on board the steamer that sails at eight to-morrow for Cuba.

"Martinez was in the whisky business as well as us, but most of his stuff went to Havana, an' places down there.

"The two that done Martinez worked for him—one here, an' the other there, an' he found out they were 'skinnin' him.

"They had good jobs—makin' barrels o' money on the outside—an' when he swore he'd fire them, they swore they'd do him—an' they did.

"We knew all about it, but, of course, it was none of our funeral—you'll find all his papers'n' money in Jack's valise."

"In whose valise?" asked Austin, remembering the watch, and looking at Kelly.

"Oh, I don't mean him—I mean Jack Rogers—one o' your men. He calls himself Rodriguez, an' looks an' talks like a Spaniard. The other is a Spaniard, named Montez."

"How about this Jack having the watch?" asked Austin.

"Oh, Montez was afraid t' carry it 'n' gave it to him."

"Well, you'll sleep in the jail as witness for to-night," said Austin. "How it will be tomorrow night depends on the truth of your story.

"Come along—and make no noise, if you value your life."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Mac. "There's another chap in front—locked up, and goin' mad, too, be the way he goes an."

"Who is it?" sternly demanded Austin.

There was no help for it, and Leary replied:

"A young fellow named Gordon!

"Rodriguez got to know him through some bank business about notes, an' then got him t' playin' faro bank. Then he got Gordon interested a little in the whisky business."

"What is he doing here?"

"Well, the night Martinez was killed, he came to that joint in the Bowery—you know it—with the young fellow that's locked up for the murder.

"They stayed all night, so, of course, this Hammond couldn't have done the job, and when Gordon heard he was arrested, he wanted to go to the front an' prove it—though his uncle would've fired him for gamblin'!"

"We persuaded him to hold off for a while—t' oblige the other two an' give them a chance t' get away—an' when he got kickin' too much we locked him up.

"It's too late though—Rodriguez stayed too long tryin' t' marry the daughter, an' get the insurance. You'll find the policiv in his bag."

"Very good," said Jack; "if your story proves true, all the better for yourself."

"Come along, now; we've no time to lose."

Mac, who had not waited for the latter part of Leary's confession, now entered with Gordon.

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the latter, addressing Leary. "If there's law in the land you shall suffer for this—not so much for merely imprisoning me, as for preventing me from doing justice to the man who is sacrificing himself for my sake."

The burly burglar shrunk back as the enraged young man approached, but Mac interfered, saying:

"Time enough for that, by'n-by, Misther Gordon. We've got t' lock him up, now."

"Right you are, Mac! Hurry along, now. If your story is true, you've nothing to fear."

As he spoke, Jack took Red Leary's arm, and Mac did the same with Kelly, while Hugh Gordon brought up the rear.

Passing quietly down-stairs and through the hallway adjoining the saloon, the party proceeded to the nearest station, where, at the request of the detectives, the prisoners were held over night.

"Now, Mac, your hour of triumph is at hand," said Jack, as they left the station-house.

"My hour of triumph, is it? Faith, that's purty good, for a quiet chap like yerself, Jack.

"Just tell me, now, phare the devil d'ye think I'd be, if it wasn't for you?

"My triumph—ay, whin white blackberries grow on apple-threes!"

That Mac felt bad, was quite evident, and, although strongly tempted, Jack forbore laughing at the other's disconsolate tone.

"All right, Mac," he responded, "if you think I've done you any service by dropping in at the right moment, you can repay me by keep-

ing quiet about my connection with this affair, for, as you know, my business is whisky—and nothing but whisky."

"But how—What am I—" began Mac.

"Just get your men," interrupted Austin. "I'll go with you as far as nabbing them, but after that I must disappear."

"I've traveled with pretty good men, but you suit better than any I've met so far, and when this thing is settled, I'd like to have a talk with you—about something big."

"Poor Phil Morris must give up the business. That crack he got was too much for him, and I'm going to make the scoundrels that caused it sweat."

Immensely pleased, although quite in the dark, Mac placed himself at Quiet Jack's orders at any moment.

"But it's not fair t' give me the credit o' this," he protested.

"Indeed! Pray, who discovered this Gordon?" asked Jack, adding:

"Don't underrate what you've done, Mac. Without Gordon, there might be no end of trouble yet. By the way, he's gone to assure Hammond's mother of her son's safety, isn't he?"

"More like Hammond's sister," replied Mac, with a grin. "Come on, we'll get over to the dock an' meet our friends."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SURPRISE ALL AROUND.

THE steamer for Havana was to sail at eight o'clock on the morning following the arrest of Red Leary, and having satisfied themselves that their men were not aboard, the detectives awaited their appearance with that untiring patience that distinguishes your true human bloodhound.

They were aboard with the purser before six o'clock, but it was within ten minutes of the hour for sailing before the murderers alighted from a cab, that came tearing down the pier.

"Hould on a minit, Misster Rod!" called out Mac, as the gentleman thus addressed started up the gangway.

He emphasized his words with a jerk that brought the Spaniard (?) back on the pier, and the next instant he had snapped a pair of handcuffs on the wrists of his man.

Quiet Jack, meantime, had performed a similar service for Montez—it being agreed that Mac should have the pleasure of taking "Misster Rod"—and the same cab that carried them to the pier brought them to Police Headquarters.

Just outside of the big building in Mulberry street Quiet Jack slipped away, after telling Mac where to find him.

The superintendent's eyebrows raised a little, when he heard Mac's charge.

"Got a man on trial for that, over in Brooklyn, haven't they?" he asked.

Mac looked as if he was making a tremendous effort to remember the circumstance, and failing, replied;

"Sure if they've got one in Brooklyn, we've got two in New York, an' we've got the right ones. They've got the evidence with them in their trunks."

"Eh? Where are the trunks?" asked the superintendent, looking much more interested than he had been, while the changing color of the prisoners proved that Mac's shot had struck the bull's-eye.

"Where are the trunks?" demanded the superintendent, and being told that they were on the cab, ordered them to be carried in and opened.

The keys of the trunks were found on the prisoners, and in that belonging to Rodriguez were found a large number of business and private papers—letters, memoranda of debts, etc., belonging to the murdered man.

"Faith, the red fellow tould no lie," said Mac, on meeting Quiet Jack an hour afterward.

"About the trunk?"

"Ay. There was enough papers, an' one thing an' another, t' hang twinty white men."

"This is the morning the trial begins, is it not?" asked Jack.

"It is. Let us hurry down t' the coort. I hope that young Gordon hasn't spoiled it for me."

Evidently Mac did not want to be cheated out of the sensation his story would create, and it was his anxiety on that point which made him suspicious of Gordon, for he had warned the latter not to tell Mrs. Hammond or her daughter how or why he knew Harry was safe.

Having nothing particular on hand, Jack accompanied his friend to the court, and on the way learned that Montez had confessed the murder, making Rodriguez the principal, and himself the accessory to the crime.

To make the affair as dramatic as possible, Mac did not hurry himself, and the trial had begun when the detectives entered the crowded court-room.

The prisoner, his mother and sister, Mrs. Martens and Julie, Gordon and the prisoner's counsel—all looked expectantly, anxiously, at Mac, and unable to resist the appealing look of the mother, the detective whispered to Mr. Bowe:

"The right men are at Headquarters; they've made a confession."

The famous lawyer was well accustomed to surprises, but this time he was—as he said afterward, "taken off his feet."

Recovering from his surprise, Mr. Bowe arose and interrupting the District Attorney, who was opening the case, said:

"My learned friend is wasting his breath, and uselessly taking up the time of the court, as he will himself acknowledge when I tell him that the men who committed the crime for which my client has been so unjustly imprisoned, are at present confined in Police Headquarters. They have confessed the crime, and as soon as I can put the confession in writing I shall demand the immediate release of my client."

This speech created a great sensation, and the judge, knowing the famous lawyer's love for the dramatic, and thinking he had purposely allowed the trial to begin before springing his surprise, asked, very sharply:

"Why did you not make this statement at the opening of the court, Mr. Bowe?"

"Now for your triumph," whispered Quiet Jack to his companion; but, alas! Mr. Bowe dashed the cup from the lips of the expectant detective.

"Your Honor," replied the lawyer, determined to make the most of the situation, "I trust, does not think that I would allow the case to proceed if this information was in my possession. Only now—not five minutes ago—I received it from a man who has been working unceasingly—night and day—to trace the perpetration of this foul crime to the actual criminals!

"To this man—this prince of detectives—who has done what the officers of the law could not—is due the credit of freeing my client from the stain of crime.

"There sits the man!"

Mac would have been more than human, to remain unmoved under this unstinted praise, and many eyes were already fixed upon him, when Mr. Bowe finished his speech, and with a dramatic wave of his hand pointed straight at—Quiet Jack Austin!

For a moment or two, Mac remained motionless. Mortification, rage, disappointment, anger—a combination of all four—heid him as if paralyzed until the thunders of applause that greeted the finish of the lawyer's speech had almost subsided.

Then with an exclamation which would not look well in print, Mac tore out of the courtroom.

Quiet Jack was possessed of a keen sense of humor. The expression of Mac's face as he jumped from his chair, proved too much for the quiet man's gravity, and the peal of laughter that burst from his lips caused much astonishment among the spectators, caused Mr. Bowe to realize his error, and caused justice to be done Mac.

Having rapped his gavel very vigorously, while the court officers cried for "order in the court!" the judge was about to administer a stinging rebuke, but Jack forestalled his purpose by rising and begging the pardon of the court.

"But, your Honor," continued Austin, "ill-timed as my mirth may have been, no one understanding the situation, could have resisted the inclination. My companion is the gentleman entitled to the credit in this matter—the one Mr. Bowe meant to indicate—and the expression of his face when I was—"

Quiet Jack could utter no more. The mere recollection of Mac's countenance caused him to sit down, choking with suppressed laughter, and the audience, quick to appreciate the situation, fairly roared—even the judge was unable to suppress a broad smile.

That settled the rebuke, and when Jack Austin reached the sidewalk he found that his generous disavowal of credit in the Martinez case, had gained him a friend who could and would appreciate his generosity.

This friend was Mac, who met him outside, and taking his hand, said:

"I heard you, Jack, and right or wrong, against friend or foe, I am always at your service."

CHAPTER XXV.

RETRIBUTION—MARRIAGE—RETRIBUTION.

AFTER leaving court, Mr. Bowe proceeded at once to Police Headquarters, where he had the confession of Montez, (and the admission of Rodriguez that it was true,) reduced to writing.

Armed with these important papers, and two bondsmen, the lawyer had little difficulty in having Harry released on bail, and, in a few hours he was at home receiving the congratulations of his friends.

The evening papers teemed with accounts of Harry's sensational escape from the toils of injustice, and great credit was given Detective McVeigh—which was the first notice his employers received of his success.

After the short conversation recorded at the end of the previous chapter, Quiet Jack and the somewhat excited Mac, were captured by Hugh Gordon, who politely informed them that he was under instructions to remain in their company until they decided to go with him to Mrs. Hammond's residence.

"They want to know how you solved the mystery," said Hugh, "and as I can't tell them you must. It's business; so you had better save time by going there at once."

"Business!" The word caught Mac, and turning to Jack Austin, he asked:

"Will ye come an' help me out?"

"Willingly," laughed Jack.

Already the news of Harry's escape was spreading throughout the city, and when, after stopping for a much-needed and belated breakfast, the detectives arrived at Mrs. Hammond's, they found quite a number of that lady's friends awaiting them.

The presence of so many fashionable people—notwithstanding the pretense of "business"—and the praises heaped upon him, caused Mac to lose his usual self-possession, and Quiet Jack was compelled to tell the story.

This he did to perfection, but despite his depreciation of his own part in the matter, Mac's occasional protests put the listeners very nearly right, and the quiet man was compelled to share the honors with his friend.

The story was barely finished when Harry and Mr. Bowe made their appearance, and during the joyous excitement that followed, the detectives slipped out.

Both Rodriguez and Montez paid the extreme penalty of the law shortly after Harry's final release.

A year after the death of her father, Julie was persuaded that there would be no particular disrespect to his memory in her acting as one of the principals in a quiet wedding.

To encourage her, Agnes Hammond consented to marry Hugh Gordon, whom Harry had accompanied to the gambling-house on the night of the murder, to see if he could devise some means of preventing another visit.

At the double wedding no guests were more warmly welcomed than Quiet Jack and Mac—no longer the "hod-carrier" in Harry's eyes—and when the latter shook their hands on parting, neither was the poorer for that frequently false token of friendship.

Of our other characters but one remains whose end is worth recording—Red Leary.

This ruffian continued his plan of preserving his own liberty at the expense of that of others, until a comparatively recent period, when he paid the penalty of his treachery to those whom he called friends.

One stormy night in the early part of November, 1887, his doom was sealed by a half-dozen well-dressed, and some of them intelligent-looking men, seated in a room, in his own house, at Coney Island, and just over the bar where his wife was then engaged in serving hot drinks to some stable-boys from the race-track.

These men had been in conference over an hour, but no decision was arrived at until one—a short, slim, little fellow, whose gray, soft hat was pulled over his eyes—exclaimed:

"There's no use beating 'round the bush! You all know what he knows and what he is. Now, the question is: how are we t' get rid of him?"

Once the bull was taken by the horns, the rest was quickly settled.

Just one month after, Red Leary was killed—accidentally—in front of the Knickerbocker Cottage on Sixth avenue.

His slayer was a western bunco-man who formed one of the party with whom the burly burglar had spent the night drinking, never suspecting that it was to be his last in the land of the living.

THE END.

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